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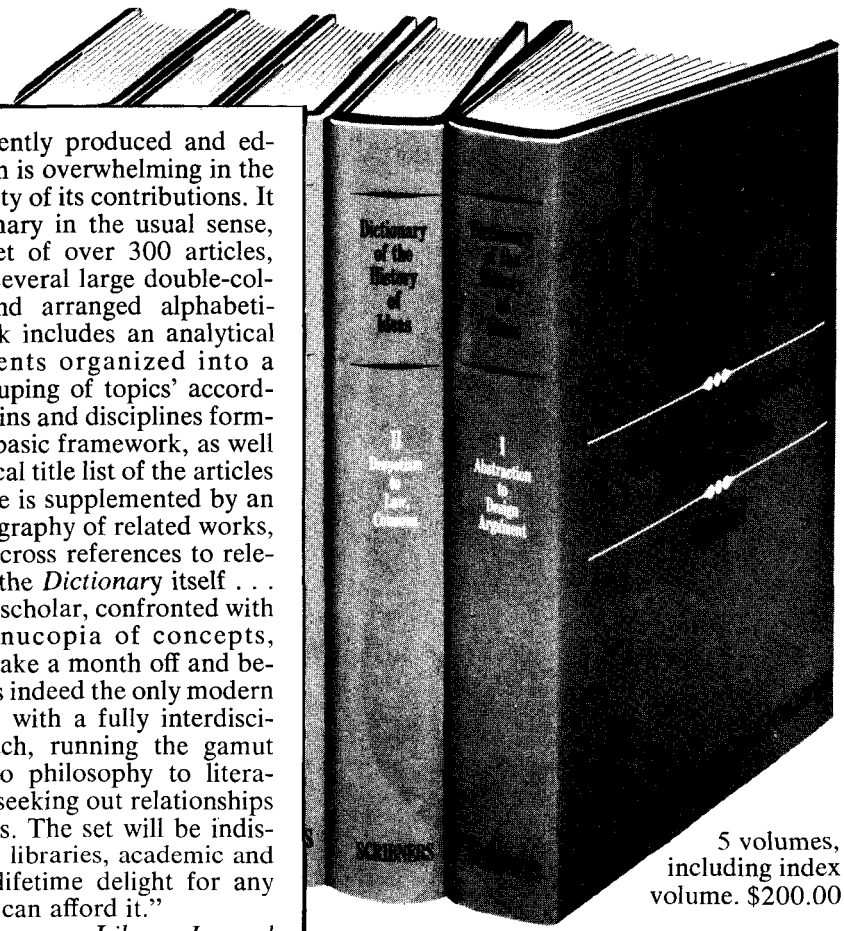

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Send all change of address notices, undeliverable copies, subscription orders and other mail to *Editorial and Circulation Offices:* 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Subscription Rates: $1.75 a copy, $6.50 one year, $11.00 two years, $15.00 three years, foreign and Canadian $.75 a year additional for postage.

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Volume 44 *Winter 1974-75* Number 1

CONTENTS

THE DESPAIRING OPTIMIST	*René Dubos*	8
Going Home Again: The New American Scholarship Boy	*Richard Rodriguez*	15
If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Possibilities	*Gregory Rabassa*	29
Speculation, *Poem*	*Howard Nemerov*	40
Musings in Munich	*Ruth* and *Peter Gay*	41
The Uncertain Future of the Humanistic Educational Ideal	*Lionel Trilling*	52
The Canal, *Poem*	*Greg Kuzma*	68
The Worst Dancers Watch Their Feet, *Poem*	*Samuel Hazo*	69
Starting Out in Chicago	*Saul Bellow*	71
American Eves in American Edens	*Judith Fryer*	78
10/11, *Poem*	*Kate Jennings*	100
REAPPRAISALS		
Heinz Hartmann and the "Conflict-Free Sphere"	*H. Stuart Hughes*	101
THEATER		
The Stages of Joseph Papp	*Stanley Kauffmann*	110
Dartmoor; The Assassin's Fatal Error, *Poems*	*Lawrence Raab*	124
MEDICINE		
The Way We Live Now	*George P. Elliott*	127
THE REVOLVING BOOKSTAND		
The Mysteries of Marcel	*Barbara Gold*	142
Reviews by Martin Stevens, William F. Claire, S. Jay Walker, James Ridgeway, Joseph Whitehill and Lewis J. Paper		151
THE READER REPLIES		167

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The Despairing Optimist

RENÉ DUBOS

The public's response to the so-called energy crisis has shown once more that we have slipped into the habit of regarding most social problems as being chiefly technical in character. We discuss *ad nauseam* the comparative efficiencies, dependabilities, and costs of the methods used for the production and consumption of energy, but we hardly give a thought to the ways of life that will be served by the energy thus produced.

In his 1973 message to Congress on "Project Independence," for example, President Nixon outlined a program for making the United States self-sufficient by 1985 with regard to energy production. He took it for granted that energy consumption would continue to increase at the dizzy rate of the past two decades and he did not even discuss whether or not all the energy production that was being planned would really be needed. Shortly after the publication of the presidential message, the National Academy of Engineering issued a report entitled "U.S. Energy Prospects: An Engineering Viewpoint." In it, the authors emphasized the enormous technical difficulties that stand in the way of achieving self-sufficiency by 1985, thus disagreeing to some extent with the technical views expressed in the president's message. Like him, however, they assumed that rapid growth in energy consumption should be maintained, as if there were no question that this is essential to public welfare and to national prestige.

The widespread belief that the production of as much energy as possible can be identified with progress seems to be justified by history since, in a general way, energy consumption per capita has increased with each new type of civilization. The Western world in particular has long been committed to the theory that any form of technical progress—vaguely defined as forward change—is desirable because it will automatically bring about an improvement in the human condition. Unquestionably, this kind of technical progress has so far always required greater expenditures of energy, and in consequence, the modern world has come to accept as self-evident the belief that the shortest way to better life is through more energy.

The view that the economic growth resulting from advanced technology would bring with it qualitative changes desirable for mankind was implicit in the Industrial Revolution; it was also the basis of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, which was focused on the contributions of scientific technology to economic development. The social philosophy of the time was explicitly stated as follows in the guidebook of the fair: "Science discovers, industry applies, and *man adapts himself to, or is molded by,* new things. . . . Individuals, groups, entire races of men, *fall into step* with . . . science and industry" [italics mine]. The extent to which this social philosophy has influenced technologic civilization is re-

✪ RENÉ DUBOS's most recent book is *Beast or Angel? Choices That Make Us Human.*

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flected in the many articles and books that were published during the 1950s and 1960s to forecast what the world would be like in the year 2000. Emphasis was then placed entirely on far-out technologies, irrespective of their relevance to human needs. It was commonly assumed that all technological developments eventually find a place in human life, and that as a result we were about to enter a technologic utopia.

One of the subtitles in the guidebook to the Chicago Fair was even more explicit. It read "Science finds, industry applies, man conforms." The very etymology of the word *conform* implies that human beings would be molded by technological forces, whether they desire it or not. In my judgment, it is precisely on this point that a great change is now taking place in the public mind and may be eventually reflected in attitudes concerning the production of energy. Most people—and especially those of the younger generation—no longer accept that their fate is to be determined by industrial forces. And it is for this reason that technological development will increasingly have to take second place to improvement in the quality of life.

The most valuable contribution of the past two decades to the welfare of mankind may well turn out to be the dawning in the mind of the general public, as well as of scientists and technologists, that real progress should not mean just moving forward on whatever roads are opened by technology, but rather aiming for goals defined by human values. When the criterion of change is the real improvement of life, the technological aspects of the energy problem are seen in a different light.

The rejection of the view that humankind must fall in step with purely technological progress and *conform* to the creations of industry is reflected in the contents and tone of the report of the Energy Policy Project, which was recently sponsored by the Ford Foundation. The title of the report, "Exploring Energy Choices," is of crucial importance because it conveys the necessity of considering not only the technical aspects of energy production and consumption, but also the uses of energy for the sake of human welfare. Instead of assuming that rapid growth in energy consumption is a *sine qua non* of progress—as was done in the president's message and in the Academy of Engineering's report—the authors of "Exploring Energy Choices" discuss at length various possible styles of life and derive from them objectives for energy policy based on the needs for each style, rather than simply deriving these objectives from extrapolations of present growth rates. In other words, instead of taking the maximization of energy supply as the only possible objective, they discuss other alternatives based not on technologic or economic feasibility but on human desirability.

In a subsequent column of the SCHOLAR I shall state my personal views concerning the role played by the use of energy in human life, and especially concerning the limitations of this role. But now I shall focus my remarks on certain problems of energy production, especially those associated with the development of the so-called "fast breeder reactor nuclear plants." This nuclear technology has been singled out for emphasis in the president's message, as well as in the reports recently issued by the Academy of Engineering and the Ford Foundation, because there is a widespread belief that it will constitute the most important new source of energy in the forthcoming decades.

I must acknowledge at the outset my complete ignorance concerning all theoretical and practical aspects of nuclear science and technology, a fact that would seem to disqualify me from expressing opinions about nuclear policies. Fifteen years ago, in her book *The Human Condition,* Hannah Arendt expressed her view that truths of the modern scientific world view no longer lend themselves to normal expression in speech and thought. Consequently they cannot enter into the political market and cannot serve as a basis for public decision making. In matters of science and technology, according to her, laymen cannot possibly make sense to each other and to

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themselves and are therefore compelled to accept the judgments and decisions of experts.

In my opinion, Hannah Arendt's pessimism is unjustified, because all technological decisions involve not only specialized technical knowledge but also, and perhaps even more importantly, human values and social judgments. In certain cases, indeed, laymen may have an advantage over scientists in technical decisions because their overall view of human problems is not distorted by the parochialism that commonly results from professional specialization. As Edmund Burke wrote in *Reflections on the Revolution in France:*

> When men are too much confined to professional and faculty habits and as it were inveterate in the recurrent employment of that narrow circle, they are rather disabled than qualified for whatever depends on the knowledge of mankind, on experience in mixed affairs, on a comprehensive, connected view of the various complicated, external, and internal interests, which go to the formation of that multifarious thing called a state.

Despite my ignorance of nuclear physics, I feel justified in expressing opinions about the breeder problem to the extent that I base these opinions on scientific facts accepted by all experts in the field and on other facts that do not require specialized scientific knowledge.

There is no doubt that in the normal course of their operations fast breeder reactors can produce ("breed," as the expression goes) more nuclear fuel than they consume. The rapid development of breeder technology would therefore have the obvious and enormous advantage of greatly postponing or perhaps eliminating completely any danger of depletion of the natural uranium stores on which the present nuclear technology is based. Furthermore, the practical knowledge of breeder technology is so advanced that three prototype fast-reactor power plants have been started in Europe during the past two years: the Soviet BN-350 at Shevchenko, in November 1972, the French Phénix at Marcoule in August 1973, and the British PFR at Dounreay in March 1974. Why then should there be any question concerning the wisdom of pushing the breeder program as fast as possible in the United States?

Opposition to the breeder program is based in part on the fact that there have been accidents, whose causes are poorly understood, and that economic feasibility has not yet been demonstrated. But experience shows that technological and economic problems of this nature can usually be solved. However, there are grave problems of another nature that transcend technological and economic solutions, because they originate in human nature.

Everyone agrees that the operation of the breeder reactors inevitably entails as a side effect the production of enormous amounts of plutonium. This creates dangers without precedent in the history of mankind—for the three following reasons: Plutonium is fantastically dangerous to human health even in minuscule amounts; it retains its activity for immense periods of time (its so-called half-life is approximately 25,000 years); it can be used by fairly simple techniques for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

Safeguarding plutonium by the ton, not only while inside the reactor, but also while in transit and in storage, constitutes therefore an absolute must if breeder technology is to become widespread and a practical component of any energy program. Unfortunately, foolproof techniques for the safe management of huge amounts of plutonium and other dangerous radioactive wastes have not yet been developed, and none are in sight. It would be pointless to enumerate here all the suggestions that have been made for dealing with this problem but it seems worthwhile to emphasize that all of them present difficulties that depend on purely human factors for which no technological know-how can provide solutions.

Since plutonium is immensely dangerous and can remain so for many hundreds of centuries, it must be stored in such a way

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that it cannot accidentally come in contact with human beings or other living forms, and in such a way also that there is no possibility of its being stolen for malevolent purposes. The magnitude of the problem is revealed by the esoteric nature of some of the tentative "solutions" that have been suggested by experts—for example, that we get rid of radioactive wastes by shooting them off in rockets to the sun, or that they be buried in Antarctica where their heat would melt the ice and thus cause them to sink until they hit bottom. In theory a more workable solution might be to bury the radioactive material deep underground in certain geological formations—for example in salt mines or by depositing them in enormous artificial structures built to last for millennia as were the pyramids. But then, if such techniques of storage are to be really safe, the mines or pyramids must be protected forever against theft, sabotage, or simply acts of madness.

The recent threat by a hijacker that he would crash his plane on the Oak Ridge National Laboratory for Nuclear Research provides a dramatic illustration of the paratechnological dangers inherent in the nuclear programs. But this kind of drama is not necessary for a recognition of the gravity of the problem. A former Navy demolition officer, now a professor at Johns Hopkins University, recently stated that a few men trained as Green Berets, in underwater demolition, or in marine reconnaissance could "sabotage virtually any nuclear reactor in the country . . . . there is no way to stop such activity other than to maintain a system of surveillance more strict than that maintained during the last world war."

In view of these facts, it has been suggested that the further development of nuclear energy, and of the breeder technology in particular, should be accompanied by the creation of a "nuclear priesthood" dedicated to the safekeeping of radioactive materials—just as in the distant past the Egyptian priesthood was responsible for the protection of the pyramids and just as public servants have watched over the dikes of Holland for several generations. But history provides little reason for confidence in the longevity and effectiveness of such social institutions. Robbers eventually penetrated the pyramids and the Dutch dike system was badly damaged by the retreating Germans at the end of the Second World War. Political turbulence is a more lasting reality than is any form of pyramid or priesthood—whether of a religious or civilian character.

Thus, while the scientific and economic aspects of the breeder technology naturally involve problems that only experts can understand, the decision to accept or reject the technology involves human considerations for which the experts have no superiority over laymen. In my opinion, the awareness of this fact is likely to become the most important force in the future of technological civilization, and this will be to the good. Half a century ago, society had accepted almost without question that, in the words of the guidebook to the Chicago World's Fair, "entire races of men fall into step with . . . science and industry." Today, citizens are beginning to demand that human desirability be given as much emphasis as scientific feasibility in technological assessment. This new social atmosphere has encouraged policy makers in the field of energy, including those directly involved in the development of the breeder technology, to formulate questions that were foreign to their professional discourse only a decade ago.

How much energy do we really need? Instead of focusing scientific and technological research only on the *production* of energy, should we not direct research also to more sensible and efficient *uses* of energy? Even if breeder reactors can be made economically profitable, are not their long-range dangers an unfair legacy to future generations? Is it not probable that the present massive commitment to the breeder technology will lead to the neglect of other sources of energy which are more desirable and safer, such as those that could be derived from the wind and especially

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from the sun? The inescapable answer to these questions is that the breeder reactor is only one of several possible alternative sources of energy and that many questions concerning its merits and pitfalls have not yet been sufficiently examined. As a result, many scientists and thoughtful citizens now entertain well-justified doubts about the wisdom of our present crash program to develop the breeder—a policy which resembles more and more an extraordinary plunge into the unknown.

I shall conclude these rambling and amateurish remarks with statements made by two illustrious nuclear physicists who have been among the most effective architects of the breeder reactor program. According to Edward Teller, the breeder reactors are potentially so dangerous that they do not belong on the surface of the earth; they should be built deep underground. According to Alvin Weinberg, the breeder program is the "Faustian bargain" of our age. It might be added that this bargain has been made on behalf of hundreds of future generations, committing them to an unprecedented responsibility without their knowledge or consent.

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The New American Scholarship Boy

RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

AT EACH STEP, WITH EVERY GRADUATION from one level of education to the next, the refrain from bystanders was strangely the same: "Your parents must be so proud of you." I suppose that my parents were proud, although I suspect, too, that they felt more than pride alone as they watched me advance through my education. They seemed to know that my education was separating us from one another, making it difficult to resume familiar intimacies. Mixed with the instincts of parental pride, a certain hurt also communicated itself—too private ever to be adequately expressed in words, but real nonetheless.

The autobiographical facts pertinent to this essay are simply stated in two sentences, though they exist in somewhat awkward juxtaposition to each other. I am the son of Mexican-American parents, who speak a blend of Spanish and English, but who read neither language easily. I am about to receive a Ph.D. in English Renaissance literature. What sort of life—what tensions, feelings, conflicts—connects these two sentences? I look back and remember my life from the time I was seven or eight years old as one of constant movement away from a Spanish-speaking folk culture toward the world of the English-language classroom. As the years passed, I felt myself becoming less like my parents and less comfortable with the assumption of visiting relatives that I was still the

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Spanish-speaking child they remembered. By the time I began college, visits home became suffused with silent embarrassment: there seemed so little to share, however strong the ties of our affection. My parents would tell me what happened in their lives or in the lives of relatives; I would respond with news of my own. Polite questions would follow. Our conversations came to seem more like interviews.

A few months ago, my dissertation nearly complete, I came upon my father looking through my bookcase. He quietly fingered the volumes of Milton's tracts and Augustine's theology with that combination of reverence and distrust those who are not literate sometimes show for the written word. Silently, I watched him from the door of the room. However much he would have insisted that he was "proud" of his son for being able to master the texts, I knew, if pressed further, he would have admitted to complicated feelings about my success. When he looked across the room and suddenly saw me, his body tightened slightly with surprise, then we both smiled.

For many years I kept my uneasiness about becoming a success in education to myself. I did so in part because I wanted to avoid vague feelings that, if considered carefully, I would have no way of dealing with; and in part because I felt that no one else shared my reaction to the opportunity provided by education. When I began to rehearse my story of cultural dislocation publicly, however, I found many listeners willing to admit to similar feelings from their own pasts. Equally impressive was the fact that many among those I spoke with were *not* from nonwhite racial groups, which made me realize that one can grow up to enter the culture of the academy and find it a "foreign" culture for a variety of reasons, ranging from economic status to religious heritage. But why, I next wondered, was it that, though there were so many of us who came from childhood cultures alien to the academy's, we voiced our uneasiness to one another and to ourselves so infrequently? Why did it take *me* so long to acknowledge publicly the cultural costs I had paid to earn a Ph.D. in Renaissance English literature? Why, more precisely, am I writing these words only now

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when my connection to my past barely survives except as nostalgic memory?

Looking back, a person risks losing hold of the present while being confounded by the past. For the child who moves to an academic culture from a culture that dramatically lacks academic traditions, looking back can jeopardize the certainty he has about the desirability of this new academic culture. Richard Hoggart's description, in *The Uses of Literacy,* of the cultural pressures on such a student, whom Hoggart calls the "scholarship boy," helps make the point. The scholarship boy must give nearly unquestioning allegiance to academic culture, Hoggart argues, if he is to succeed at all, so different is the milieu of the classroom from the culture he leaves behind. For a time, the scholarship boy may try to balance his loyalty between his concretely experienced family life and the more abstract mental life of the classroom. In the end, though, he must choose between the two worlds: if he intends to succeed as a student, he must, literally and figuratively, separate himself from his family, with its gregarious life, and find a quiet place to be alone with his thoughts.

After a while, the kind of allegiance the young student might once have given his parents is transferred to the teacher, the new parent. Now without the support of the old ties and certainties of the family, he almost mechanically acquires the assumptions, practices, and style of the classroom milieu. For the loss he might otherwise feel, the scholarship boy substitutes an enormous enthusiasm for nearly everything having to do with school.

How readily I read my own past into the portrait of Hoggart's scholarship boy. Coming from a home in which mostly Spanish was spoken, for example, I had to decide to forget Spanish when I began my education. To succeed in the classroom, I needed psychologically to sever my ties with Spanish. Spanish represented an alternate culture as well as another language—and the basis of my deepest sense of relationship to my family. Although I recently taught myself to read Spanish, the language that I see on the printed page is not quite the language I heard in my youth. That

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other Spanish, the spoken Spanish of my family, I remember with nostalgia and guilt: guilt because I cannot explain to aunts and uncles why I do not answer their questions any longer in their own idiomatic language. Nor was I able to explain to teachers in graduate school, who regularly expected me to read and speak Spanish with ease, why my very ability to reach graduate school as a student of English literature in the first place required me to loosen my attachments to a language I spoke years earlier. Yet, having lost the ability to speak Spanish, I never forgot it so totally that I could not understand it. Hearing Spanish spoken on the street reminded me of the community I once felt a part of, and still cared deeply about. I never forgot Spanish so thoroughly, in other words, as to move outside the range of its nostalgic pull.

Such moments of guilt and nostalgia were, however, just that—momentary. They punctuated the history of my otherwise successful progress from *barrio* to classroom. Perhaps they even encouraged it. Whenever I felt my determination to succeed wavering, I tightened my hold on the conventions of academic life.

Spanish was one aspect of the problem, my parents another. They could raise deeper, more persistent doubts. They offered encouragement to my brothers and me in our work, but they also spoke, only half jokingly, about the way education was putting "big ideas" into our heads. When we would come home, for example, and challenge assumptions we earlier believed, they would be forced to defend their beliefs (which, given our new verbal skills, they did increasingly less well) or, more frequently, to submit to our logic with the disclaimer, "It's what we were taught in our time to believe. . . ." More important, after we began to leave home for college, they voiced regret about how "changed" we had become, how much further away from one another we had grown. They partly yearned for a return to the time before education assumed their children's primary loyalty. This yearning was renewed each time they saw their nieces and nephews (none of whom continued their education beyond high school, all of whom continued to speak fluent Spanish) living according to the conventions and assumptions of their parents' culture. If I was already troubled

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by the time I graduated from high school by that refrain of congratulations ("Your parents must be so proud. . . ."), I realize now how much more difficult and complicated was my progress into academic life for my parents, as they saw the cultural foundation of their family erode, than it was for me.

Yet my parents were willing to pay the price of alienation and continued to encourage me to become a scholarship boy because they perceived, as others of the lower classes had before them, the relation between education and social mobility. Lacking the former themselves made them acutely aware of its necessity as prerequisite for the latter. They sent their children off to school in the hopes of their acquiring something "better" beyond education. Notice the assumption here that education is something of a tool or license—a means to an end, which has been the traditional way the lower or working classes have viewed the value of education in the past. That education might alter children in more basic ways than providing them with skills, certificates of proficiency, and even upward mobility, may come as a surprise for some, but the financial cost is usually tolerated.

Complicating my own status as a scholarship boy in the last ten years was the rise, in the mid-1960s, of what was then called "the Third World Student Movement." Racial minority groups, led chiefly by black intellectuals, began to press for greater access to higher education. The assumption behind their criticism, like the assumption of white working-class families, was that educational opportunity was useful for economic and social advancement. The racial minority leaders went one step further, however, and it was this step that was probably most revolutionary. Minority students came to the campus feeling that they were representative of larger groups of people—that, indeed, they were advancing the condition of entire societies by their matriculation. Actually, this assumption was not altogether new to me. Years before, educational success was something my parents urged me to strive for precisely because it would reflect favorably on *all* Mexican-Americans—specifically, my intellectual achievement would help deflate

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the stereotype of the "dumb Pancho." This early goal was only given greater currency by the rhetoric of the Third World spokesmen. But it was the fact that I felt myself suddenly much more a "public" Mexican-American, a representative of sorts, that was to prove so crucial for me during these years.

One college admissions officer assured me one day that he recognized my importance to his school precisely as deriving from the fact that, after graduation, I would surely be "going back to [my] community." More recently, teachers have urged me not to trouble over the fact that I am not "representative" of my culture, assuring me that I can serve as a "model" for those still in the *barrio* working toward academic careers. This is the line that I hear, too, when being interviewed for a faculty position. The interviewer almost invariably assumes that, because I am racially a Mexican-American, I can serve as a special counselor to minority students. The expectation is that I still retain the capacity for intimacy with "my people."

This new way of thinking about the possible uses of education is what has made the entrance of minority students into higher education so dramatic. When the minority group student was accepted into the academy, he came—in everyone's mind—as part of a "group." When I began college, I barely attracted attention except perhaps as a slightly exotic ("Are you from India?") brown-skinned student; by the time I graduated, my presence was annually noted by, among others, the college public relations office as "one of the fifty-two students with Spanish surnames enrolled this year." By having his presence announced to the campus in this way, the minority group student was unlike any other scholarship boy the campus had seen before. The minority group student now dramatized more publicly, if also in new ways, the issues of cultural dislocation that education forces, issues that are not solely racial in origin. When Richard Rodriguez *became* a Chicano, the dilemmas he earlier had as a scholarship boy were complicated but not decisively altered by the fact that he had assumed a group identity.

The assurance I heard that, somehow, I was being useful to

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my community by being a student was gratefully believed, because it gave me a way of dealing with the guilt and cynicism that each year came my way along with the scholarships, grants, and, lately, job offers from schools which a few years earlier would have refused me admission as a student. Each year, in fact, it became harder to believe that my success had anything to do with my intellectual performance, and harder to resist the conclusion that it was due to my minority group status. When I drove to the airport, on my way to London as a Fulbright Fellow last year, leaving behind cousins of my age who were already hopelessly burdened by financial insecurity and dead-end jobs, momentary guilt could be relieved by the thought that somehow my trip was beneficial to persons other than myself. But, of course, if the thought was a way of dealing with the guilt, it was also the reason for the guilt. Sitting in a university library, I would notice a janitor of my own race and grow uneasy; I was, I knew, in a rough way a beneficiary of his condition. Guilt was accompanied by cynicism. The most dazzlingly talented minority students I know today refuse to believe that their success is wholly based on their own talent, or even that when they speak in a classroom anyone hears them as anything but *the* voice of their minority group. It is scarcely surprising, then, though initially it probably seemed puzzling, that so many of the angriest voices on the campus against the injustices of racism came from those not visibly its primary victims.

It became necessary to believe the rhetoric about the value of one's presence on campus simply as a way of living with one's "success." Among ourselves, however, minority group students often admitted to a shattering sense of loss—the feeling that, somehow, something was happening to us. Especially from students who had not yet become accustomed, as by that time I had, to the campus, I remember hearing confessions of extreme discomfort and isolation. Our close associations, the separate dining-room tables, and the special dormitories helped to relieve some of the pain, but only some of it.

Significant here was the development of the ethnic studies concept—black studies, Chicano studies, et cetera—and the related

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assumption held by minority group students in a number of departments that they could keep in touch with their old cultures by making these cultures the subject of their study. Here again one notices how different the minority student was from other comparable students: other scholarship boys—poor Jews and the sons of various immigrant cultures—came to the academy singly, much more inclined to accept the courses and material they found. The ethnic studies concept was an indication that, for a multitude of reasons, the new racial minority group students were not willing to give up so easily their ties with their old cultures.

The importance of these new ethnic studies was that they introduced the academy to subject matter that generally deserved to be studied, and at the same time offered a staggering critique of the academy's tendency toward parochialism. Most minority group intellectuals never noted this tendency toward academic parochialism. They more often saw the reason for, say, the absence of a course on black literature in an English department as a case of simple racism. That it might instead be an instance of the fact that academic culture can lose track of human societies and whole areas of human experience was rarely raised. Never asking such a question, the minority group students never seemed to wonder either if as teachers their own courses might suffer the same cultural limitations other seminars and classes suffered. Consequently, in a peculiar way the new minority group critics of higher education came to justify the academy's assumptions. The possibility that academic culture could encourage one to grow out of touch with cultures beyond its conceptual horizon was never seriously considered.

Too often in the last ten years one heard minority group students repeat the joke, never very funny in the first place, about the racial minority academic who ended up sounding more "white" than white academics. Behind the scorn for such a figure was the belief that the new generation of minority group students would be able to avoid having to make similar kinds of cultural concessions. The pressures that might have led to such conformity went unexamined.

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For the last few years my annoyance at hearing such jokes was doubtless related to the fact that I was increasingly beginning to sense that I was the "bleached" academic the minority group students found so laughable. I suppose I had always sensed that my cultural allegiance was undergoing subtle alterations as I was being educated. Only when I finished my course work in graduate school and went off to England for my dissertation year did I grasp how far I had traveled from my cultural origins. My year in England was actually my first opportunity to write and reflect upon the kind of material that I would spend my life producing. It was my first chance, too, to be free simultaneously of the distractions of course-work and of the insecurities of trying to find my niche in academic life. Sitting in the reading room of the British Museum, I no longer doubted that I had joined academic society. Ironically, this feeling of having finally arrived allowed me to look back to the community whence I came. That I was geographically farther away from my home than I had ever been lent a metaphorical resonance to the cultural distance I suddenly felt.

But the feeling was not pleasing. The reward of feeling a part of the world of the British Museum was an odd one. Each morning I would arrive at the reading room and grow increasingly depressed by the silence and what the silence implied—that my life as a scholar would require self-absorption. Who, I wondered, would find my work helpful enough to want to read it? Was not my dissertation—whose title alone would puzzle my relatives—only my grandest exercise thus far in self-enclosure? The sight of the heads around me bent over their texts and papers, many so thoroughly engrossed that they wouldn't look up at the silent clock overhead for hours at a stretch, made me recall the remarkable noises of life in my family home. The tedious prose I was writing, a prose constantly qualified by footnotes, reminded me of the capacity for passionate statement those of the culture I was born into commanded—and which, could it be, I had now lost.

As I remembered it during those gray English afternoons, the past rushed forward to define more precisely my present condition. Remembering my youth, a time when I was not restricted

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to a chair but ran barefoot under a summer sun that tightened my skin with its white heat, made the fact that it was only my mind that "moved" each hour in the library painfully obvious.

I did need to figure out where I had lost touch with my past. I started to become alien to my family culture the day I became a scholarship boy. In the British Museum the realization seemed obvious. But later, returning to America, I returned to minority group students who were still speaking of their cultural ties to their past. How was I to tell them what I had learned about myself in England?

A short while ago, a group of enthusiastic Chicano undergraduates came to my office to ask me to teach a course to high school students in the *barrio* on the Chicano novel. This new literature, they assured me, has an important role to play in helping to shape the consciousness of a people currently without adequate representation in literature. Listening to them I was struck immediately with the cultural problems raised by their assumption. I told them that the novel is not capable of dealing with Chicano experience adequately, simply because most Chicanos are not literate, or are at least not yet comfortably so. This is not something Chicanos need to apologize for (though, I suppose, remembering my own childhood ambition to combat stereotypes of the Chicano as mental menial, it is not something easily admitted). Rather the genius and value of those Chicanos who do not read seem to me to be largely that their reliance on voice, the spoken word, has given them the capacity for intimate conversation that I, as someone who now relies heavily on the written word, can only envy. The second problem, I went on, is more in the nature of a technical one: the novel, in my opinion, is not a form capable of being true to the basic sense of communal life that typifies Chicano culture. What the novel as a literary form is best capable of representing is solitary existence set against a large social background. Chicano novelists, not coincidentally, nearly always fail to capture the breathtakingly rich family life of most Chicanos, and instead often describe only the individual Chicano in transit between Mexican and American cultures.

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I said all of this to the Chicano students in my office, and could see that little of it made an impression. They seemed only frustrated by what they probably took to be a slick, academic justification for evading social responsibility. After a time, they left me, sitting alone. . . .

There is a danger of being misunderstood here. I am not suggesting that an academic cannot reestablish ties of any kind with his old culture. Indeed, he can have an impact on the culture of his childhood. But as an academic, one exists by definition in a culture separate from one's nonacademic roots and, therefore, any future ties one has with those who remain "behind" are complicated by one's new cultural perspective.

Paradoxically, the distance separating the academic from his nonacademic past can make his past seem, if not closer, then clearer. It is possible for the academic to understand the culture from which he came "better" than those who still live within it. In my own experience, it has only been as I have come to appraise my past through categories and notions derived from the social sciences that I have been able to think of Chicano life in cultural terms at all. Characteristics I took for granted or noticed only in passing—the spontaneity, the passionate speech, the trust in concrete experience, the willingness to think communally rather than individually—these are all significant phenomena to me now as aspects of a total culture. (My parents have neither the time nor the inclination to think about their culture as a culture.) Able to conceptualize a sense of Chicano culture, I am now also more attracted to that culture than I was before. The temptation now is to try to preserve those traits of my old culture that have not yet, in effect, atrophied.

The racial self-consciousness of minority group students during the last few years evident in the ethnic costumes, the stylized gestures, and the idiomatic though often evasive devices for insisting on one's continuing membership in the community of the past, are also indications that the minority group student has gained a new appreciation of the culture of his origin precisely because of his

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earlier alienation from it. As a result, Chicano students sometimes become more Chicano than most Chicanos. I remember, for example, my father's surprise when, walking across my college campus one afternoon, we came upon two Chicano academics wearing serapes. He and my mother were also surprised—indeed offended—when they earlier heard student activists use the word "Chicano." For them the term was a private one, primarily descriptive of persons they knew. It suggested intimacy. Hearing the word shouted into a microphone by a stranger left them bewildered. What they could not understand was that the student activist finds it easier than they to use "Chicano" in a more public way, for his distance from their culture and his membership in academic culture permits a wider and more abstract view.

The Mexican-Americans who begin to call themselves Chicanos in this new way are actually forming a new version of what it means to be a Chicano. The culture that didn't see itself as a culture is suddenly prized and identified for being one. The price one pays for this new self-consciousness is the knowledge of just that—it is *new*—and this knowledge is not available to those who remain at home. So it is knowledge that separates as well as unites people. Wanting more desperately than ever to assert his ties with the newly visible culture, the minority group student is tempted to exploit those characteristics of that culture that might yet survive in him. But the self-consciousness never allows one to feel completely at ease with the old culture. Worse, the knowledge of the culture of the past often leaves one feeling strangely solitary. At home, I hear relatives speak and find myself analyzing too much of what they say. It is embarrassing being a cultural anthropologist in one's own family's kitchen. I keep feeling myself little more than a cultural voyeur. I often come away from family gatherings suspecting, in fact, that what conceptions of my culture I carry with me are no more than illusions. Because they were never there before, because no one back home shares them, I grow less and less to trust their reliability: too often they seem no more than mental bubbles floating before an academic's eye.

Many who have taught minority group students in the last

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decade testify to sensing characteristics of a childhood culture still very much alive in these students. Should the teacher make these students aware of these characteristics? Initially, most of us would probably answer negatively. Better to trust the unconscious survival of the past than the always problematical, sometimes even clownish, re-creations of it. But the cultural past cannot be assured of survival; perhaps many of its characteristics are lost simply because the student is never encouraged to look for them. Even those that do survive do so tenuously. As a teacher, one can only hope that the best qualities in his minority group students' cultural legacy aren't altogether snuffed out by academic education.

More easy to live with and distinguishable from self-conscious awareness of the past are the ways the past unconsciously survives—perhaps even yet survives in me. As it turns out, the issue becomes less acute with time. With each year, the chance that the student is unaware of his cultural legacy is diminished as the habit of academic reflectiveness grows stronger. Although the culture of the academy makes innocence about one's cultural past less likely, this same culture, and the conceptual tools it provides, increases the desire to want to write and speak about the past. The paradox persists.

Awaiting the scholarship boy who finally acknowledges the fact that his perceptions of reality have changed is the dilemma of action. The sentimental reaction to this knowledge entails merely a refusal to renew contact with one's nonacademic culture lest one contaminate it. The problem, however, with this sentimental solution is that it overlooks the way academic culture renders one capable of dealing with the transactions of mass society. Academic culture, with its habits of conceptualization and abstraction, allows those of us from other cultures to deal with each other in a mass society. In this sense academic culture does have a profound political impact. Although people intent upon social mobility think of education as a means to an end, education does become an end: its culture allows one to exist more easily in a society increasingly anonymous and impersonal. The truth is, the academic's distance

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from his own experience brings the capacity for communicating with bureaucracies and understanding one's position in society—a prerequisite for political action.

If the sentimental reaction to nonacademic culture is to fear changing it, the political response, typical especially of working-class and lately minority group leaders, is to see higher education solely in terms of its political and social possibilities. Its cultural consequences, in this view, are disregarded. At this time when we are so keenly aware of social and economic inequality, it might seem beside the point to warn those who are working to bring about equality that education alters culture as well as economic status. And yet, if there is one main criticism that I, as a minority group student, must make of minority group leaders in their past attacks on the "racism" of the academy, it is that they never distinguished between my right to higher education and the desirability of my actually entering the academy—which is another way of saying again that they never recognized that there were things I could lose by becoming a scholarship boy.

Certainly, the academy changes those from alien cultures more than it is changed by them. While minority groups had an impact on higher education, largely because of their advantage in coming as a group, within the last few years students such as myself, who finally ended up certified as academics, also ended up sounding very much like the academics we found when we came to the campus. I do not enjoy making such admissions. But perhaps now the time has come when questions about the cultural costs of education ought to be delayed no longer. Those of us who have been scholarship boys know in our bones that our education has exacted a large price in exchange for the large benefits it has conferred upon us. And what is sadder to consider, after we have paid that price, we go home and casually change the cultures that nurtured us. My parents today understand how they are "Chicanos" in a large and impersonal sense. The gains from such knowledge are clear. But so, too, are the reasons for regret.

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If This Be Treason

Translation and Its Possibilities

GREGORY RABASSA

Traduttore, traditore
—Italian cliché

IN THIS AGE OF THE BAD MOUTH, where a kind word is as rare as a Buick in a college town, translation has had more than its share of opprobrium. This is probably due to its being a kind of bastard art, an intermediate form, and as such always vulnerable to attack. Translation is almost as old as language, certainly as old as the contact of a language with alien speakers. In spite of the fact that it is an ancient craft, its ways are still rather mysterious, and most analyses have fallen short of the mark in defining what translation is or, at least, what it should be. The inconsequence of the last fact would seem to make translation an art, something defined by its very existence or by its uses, as Ortega might have put it.

Problem-seekers will find an inordinate amount of material in translation, precisely because it partakes of other, more definable aspects of writing. It is a sort of literary suburb, lacking a core or personality of its own. If it is not clearly derivative, it is, then, treasonous and even treacherous, for it will be misleading. If it is too servile to the alien form, then it is guilty of misfeasance rather than malfeasance, for it has not carried over the natural feel of the original. The translator can be adventurous, but he cannot be an adventurer as the original writer can. He must follow the explorer's route, albeit in a different type of vessel.

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Perhaps the main difference between the art of fiction, for example, and that of translation is that the translator's prime task is concerned with words, the tale and the ideas all having been received. In the age-old and disputed dichotomy of form and content, his work is solely concerned with the former as he tries to do as little concommitant mischief to the latter as possible, none in an ideal translation. Therefore, a textual analysis of translation lies closer to the realm of semantics and linguistics than to more diffuse literary study. Still and all, there is no manual or handbook for the creation of a perfect translation as there is none for the writer of a novel. In both cases, only the critic or reader would be adequately served by such a guide. Machines can now do rudimentary translations, and the results, practical as they may be, are literary abominations.

The basic problem of the writer as he moves along is that he must name things: objects, actions, ideas. He must often choose among possibilities and synonyms for the *mot juste;* but since it is his creation, at some point he can sit back and cease pondering. It is his work, take it or leave it. The translator, however, is at one remove. He must find the *mot juste* for a *mot juste* out of his own bag of possibilities in a different language. The original agonizing is still there with his own added to it. Borges once advised his translator, Norman Thomas Di Giovanni, to write what he was trying to say, not what he was saying. In that case it was easier because the writer was on hand and knew English. The advice is good, but how can we be sure what Tasso was "trying to say"? The writer can be Adam, giving names to things as they parade by, but the translator cannot be that inventive; his craft is what Ronald Christ might properly call "the narrow act."

The translator's chore is, therefore, sometimes even more difficult than that of the writer, for he must subordinate himself to two languages, not one. With simple objects, platonic ideals, the problem of meaning is easily solved. *Tree* is *árbol,* no doubt about it. Everyone will more or less see the same thing in his respective language. But the words to designate this common object are so different. In fact, they do not coincide in number of syllables and if we remember that *r* represents two distinct sounds in English

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and Spanish, no two phonemes are the same. The mind's eye may be universal, but the ear has been trained to follow different paths. This extreme case is an example of one impossibility of translation. Translation can never be reproduction; it is not a copy. As the Latin root shows, it is a leading across to the other side, a setting-over, as the Germans call it. There is nothing we can do about *tree,* and we can only hope that some hidden subtlety was not missed and lost in translation. This impossibility is what ultimately renders poetry untranslatable, or, *strictu sensu,* still further removed from reproduction. Indeed, Robert Frost saw fit to use translation as the touchstone for his definition of poetry: what's left out in translation.

If we take that same tree, however, and start taking it apart, the problem of synonymous expression arises and the translator must make his choice, yearning to go from Plato to the Marabar Caves and say whatchamacallit. We come to the part of the tree that grows out of the main trunk, called *rama* in Spanish. What shall we call it in English? Is it a branch, a bough, a limb, or what? We can simply call it *branch,* for *rama* also covers the figurative meaning *branch* has in English, but that might be too easy, something might be lost—we might be missing the poetry. This is the time to follow the Borgesian dictum. Who is speaking? Would his Anglophonic equivalent be a branch-man, a bough-man, or a limb-man? And we seek help from our bilingual dictionary. This drab old friend, sneered at by the "fluent," is a great font of synonyms and is quite useful in jogging the memory. The ultimate solution is, more often than not, instinctive. This means that the translator must be close in one way or another to the writer. At least, he must have some understanding of him and his ways.

The translator, therefore, like the critic and scholar, must be a reader. The ideal translator must be the ideal reader, a rare breed, for a translation ought to be the closest possible reading of a work. The fact that people who can read another language well cannot always translate it well into their own tongue means that the translator must also be a writer. He must have at least those "technical" skills that the writer possesses. Although his

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own imagination is governed by that of his author, it still must be able to understand and follow what the latter is imagining. A translator is a reader, then, but one who writes what he reads. He is a writer, but really only half a one. He need not trouble his imagination about plot or theme or characters, but still, as Borges has pointed out, he must know what his author was up to when he established all of that. And yet, the act of writing and the act of translating are two different things. Writers who can work in more than one language, such as Nabokov and Beckett, usually prefer to have someone else translate them into English; Gilberto Freyre's essays written in English are put into Portuguese by other hands. If I were asked to put this piece into Spanish or Portuguese, I would end up with something that would be more than a translation; it would be a version. In that case I would have the freedom of an author, normally and rightfully denied me as a translator. Many times I have been completely satisfied when something I have written has finally appeared in print; I have never been satisfied with the "final" version of a translation I have done, always wishing I had done thus and so instead, as hindsight comes to the fore. From this we can conclude that while a novel may have a final form, such is not possible with a translation, even when it is the work of a single translator.

Translation is hard put to extend its life beyond its time. A translation, no matter how good, is apt to be too contemporary and rarely endures. An exception, the King James Version, has become institutionalized to the degree that it is almost another book in itself. It is a version indeed, much like the variants of folk tales and legends. It is known that every age must have its own translation of a classic and for reasons that go beyond accuracy, while the classic itself is usually as "modern" (is this what the word "relevant" means when it is misused and unattached?) as when it was written. Cervantes' *Quijote* read today is much more modern than Motteux's version, and a century from now the Putnam and Cohen translations will no doubt sound old-fashioned. The reason is hard to explain, for these are good translations. It must have something to do with the fact that no translation is ever final.

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If translations have difficulty enduring in time, they have an even harder struggle, in many cases, making spatial adjustments. Some books are very mulish about being "led across." Regional and local literature has a flavor that is immediately sensed in the original language. Only when that flavor is limited to the *mise-en-scène* and does not affect the language to any large degree can the translator score a subtle success in preserving it. Just as words do not have real equivalents in other languages, neither do dialects or local patterns of speech. Rustics are rustics the world over, but it is absurd and outlandish to have a Brazilian *sertanejo* talking like an Appalachian mountain man. Even black English is poorly served by translation into black Spanish. The African roots are too remote, and the diverging histories of forced migration under two distinct European cultures have produced two quite different modes of expression. The transfer of local or regional idiom into another language, therefore, must be listed as another of the impossibilities of translation.

A similar problem, but one that can be solved, is the problem that arises when an environment that is commonplace in one culture becomes exotic in the other. I recall that the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa was concerned that the English translation of his novel *The Green House,* which I was working on, would give an exotic tone to what in Peru was commonplace. He was worried about the names of flora and fauna that have no translation, since they do not exist in English-speaking countries and no Anglo-Saxon Adam had passed through to give them lexical identity. I did not think it serious enough to warrant a certain dilution I had come across while working on the Guatemalan novelist Miguel Angel Asturias. In that case, I had been faced with a tree under which someone had sat and which bore an ever-so-exotic Mayan name. The French translation preceded mine, and when I got my hands on it, I figured that the solution lay there, and in a good bilingual dictionary. Alas, I found that the man had sat down under an *arbre*. That, of course, did away with the exotic, but it also made a translation into Basque impossible, as that wild language can name any tree within its Pyrenean ken, but had to borrow from the Latin via Castilian in order to say "tree." The

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Peruvian trees remained with their aboriginal names, for, as I explained to the author, many commonplace aspects of Peru are, per se, exotic to the outsider. If a novel is universal, the universality should not be hindered by the strange. Jonathan Swift has proven this fact and, indeed, used it to great advantage. So the transfer of the ordinary from one culture to another is apt to be another impossibility of translation.

There is a situation in which the translator cannot follow the original at all in its linguistic intent, but must accede to his own experience and feelings in his mother tongue. Otherwise we have something that is indeed inventive and exotic, but far removed from the intent of the here and now. This is the case of expletives (a word that recently and joyfully has been added to the vocabularies of our own M. Beaucaires). If any form of word can be called untranslatable, meaning having a close adherence to the word-for-word meaning of the original, it is the expletive. The simplest of sounds and expressions differ most from language to language: the belch, the grunt, the animal sound. A rooster, when speaking English, says cock-a-doodle-doo; if the same breed is a Spanish-speaker, or crower, he says ki-ki-ri-ki (admitting that k is a foreign letter). In English, an insult to one's parentage uses the dog as the image, while the Spanish *hijo de puta* is more direct, but the English equivalent "whoreson" is archaic and can no longer be used. In ordinary usage *hijo de puta* must be rendered "son of a bitch," else we lose the emotional charge. The Portuguese is more subtle, *filho da mãe* (son of your mother), innocent on the surface, but inviting all the vileness the imagination can bring to bear. I recall an episode in Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* in which the hero has pounded his thumb with a hammer as he tries to straighten a nail. *"Puta que te parió,"* he addresses the nail. If we leave it at that, we get a Hemingwayish "whore that bore you," but the intent is different. My solution was to have him accuse the nail of incestuous proclivities toward its dam, which is current, ripe, and even maintains a bit of the tone of the Spanish insult. The fact that insults cannot be rendered so closely as we might like means that while words can be translated directly, cultures themselves cannot be without grotesque distortion.

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We have seen that the translator is not the free-flying artist that the writer can be, that it is, indeed, the writer who causes the translator to hew to a narrow path if he is to do his job well and correctly. Even when the translator is compared to the performing musician who interprets an extant composition written by someone else, the comparison is not exact because the musician is, above all, interpretive and has the freedom to enhance the piece being played, as Billie Holiday would by her rendition convert the most banal pop tune into a masterpiece. I have said that the translator qua translator must never engage in the silk-purse business, regardless of the temptation to do so. To continue the musical analogy, there is no place for riffs in translation.

Having looked into a few of the many possibilities and impossibilities in the making of a translation, now we must look to the other side, how a translation should be judged, what a critic should look for, and who, ideally, he should be. A translator's ego is most wounded, of course, when the review fails to mention him, even to the point of omitting his name from the heading and risking a letter of admonishment from the novelist B. J. Chute, who, with her watchful eye, has done a splendid job seeing that translators receive their due. Some reviewers will also go on about the magnificent language of a novel without mentioning the fact that it is the language of translation, as if the book had been written in English to begin with. Even when the translator is mentioned and praised, he should be wary and not let it go to his head. Quite often this sort of encomium really only covers half of his accomplishment, for it may be that the reviewer, perceptive as he may be, has no knowledge of the work in the original and more than likely is not familiar with the language it was first written in. In this case, the translator has been told that he writes well, not that he translates well. Many reviewers of this type, however, will then go on to discuss and analyze the book with great intelligence and insight, which, by indirection, tells the translator that he has translated well. Gabriel García Márquez has said that American reviewers, on the whole, have understood *One Hundred Years of Solitude* much better than critics in his own language. And, of course, many of these American reviewers have had to rely com-

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pletely on the English version. This would imply that it is almost possible for an astute reader to judge the merits of a translation without recourse to the original language.

The bane of the translator more often than not is the critic who does know the other language; he is usually an academician who has done his homework and checked out the English against the original. If there is a mistake or a slip, he will surely find it, and he is not above suggesting alternate possibilities, some of which are as cogent as that exasperating last entry on multiple-choice exams, "None of these." Sara Blackburn has dubbed this fellow Professor Horrendo, and he is too much with us as he brings the nastiness of the academic *ninguneo* (Mexican for put-down) into literary criticism. But it is his mood that offends, for in truth he is often right: there have been mistakes, they should be corrected, which is why it is impossible for a translation ever to be final. The translator is irked, of course, and is left wondering why the full-dress court-martial when company punishment would suffice.

These two types of critic are also an indication of the problems arising out of the possible academic uses of translation. Although in most institutions the bath water of required language courses has been thrown out, the baby of intellectuality has managed to hang on precariously to the edge of the tub. The literary aim of the language requirement was for the student to reach the level of understanding that would permit him to read works in the original and thereby become immersed in the other culture. This was a noble aim that was rarely attained. It has been my experience that the student who knew all of his radical-changing verbs understood less of the literature he came to in the new language than the one who fumbled and mumbled but had read broadly or had taken a number of English courses. How sad it was to see a student who had launched into an enthusiastic interpretation or discovery delivered in English be deflated by Professor Horrendo's *"En español, señor."* Language learning and the study of literature are two completely different things, and translation has to be a part of the latter if it is to receive the breadth that is inherent to it.

With the decline of the language requirement, departments

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have begun to offer courses now called "literature in translation," a term that still has a demeaning ring to it—something easy, something tawdry, something secondhand. Departments of comparative literature are gaining respectability and perhaps soon they will be called departments of literature, as they should be. Now writers who are relevant to one another are studied side by side in a common language, and are not overwhelmed by the host of mediocrities who happen to share their native tongue. My experience has shown me that a student is led into language study through literature, not the reverse. There are those who begin Greek after reading Aeschylus and others who take Portuguese because they were first fascinated by Machado de Assis in English. Translation is possibly the surest route to the serious study of a language, because translation is essentially language.

The teaching of translation as a craft or art has also been attempted of late in many universities. Given our questioning about the possibility of translation itself, it would seem that teaching someone how to do it is improbable at least. Yet it can be done to a limited degree. Creative writing courses, which have long been with us, have shown us that some students can learn from them and some cannot, but that most of them do come out writing better, even though they may never be "writers." A writer *manqué* can be a translator, but what do we do with a translator *manqué,* turn him toward linguistics? These students can be guided, but they must come with certain skills and aptitudes. Too often the candidate for a translation seminar (my rural upbringing leads me to disdain the term "workshop," which always makes me think of planes and plumb lines and the good old days when overalls had the manure on the outside) comes in with an ability or a fluency in a foreign language, but without any carefully formed concepts of the uses of his own. Before anyone can be taught the fine points of translation, he must be taught how to use to the utmost the language he will be writing in. This can be done, and I have found that translation courses are most often courses in the writing of English; and if this is kept in mind, it is possible to teach translation.

It is time for at least one definitive statement about transla-

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tion: it is impossible to make a handsome living from it. Like so many other artistic endeavors, it is an adjunct or a labor of love. A person frugal in his wants can possibly live off it. The successful translator, catalyst that he is, is not rewarded to the degree that the successful writer is. Although there are changes in the offing, until now the practice has been to pay the translator a flat fee for his work, based on the number of words he has done or an accurate estimate thereof. The contracts are stately and never talk in terms of pennies. It is twenty dollars, twenty-five dollars, thirty dollars per thousand words, never three cents a word, which is what it amounts to. Sometimes, when I feel particularly mean and grubby, I think about devising some kind of meter that would be attached to the space bar of my typewriter and would keep me abreast of how much I have made so far. There must be a touch of Cratchit along with a dollop of Micawber in every translator. This is necessary when friends celebrate a book one has translated that is doing well, when all the while they should be commiserating.

The situation grows better, however, due in large measure to collective activities. The P.E.N. American Center has an active translation committee, which, aside from fostering the translation of neglected books and languages, has drawn up a Manifesto on Translation and is working on a model contract that will include royalties for translators. Current thought has it that these should come from the author's share, for, after all, without the translator his work would not have reached a new audience and source of income. The publisher is faced with a twofold financial burden in the case of translations: a translation is more costly than a manuscript in English because money must be spent to render it in English, and the American reading public is notoriously reluctant to buy foreign fiction in the quantity that it does native works. Only rarely does a translated book make the best-seller lists, and then usually quite briefly. The Center for Inter-American Relations has done great work in helping to defray the costs of translation of Latin-American works, thus placing the book on the same level financially as an original manuscript in English. Many times enlightened publishers will put out a foreign author

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knowing that the book will probably be a financial loss but considering it a prestigious duty, as in the case of most volumes of poetry. Translators are in good company.

Heaven-sent or hell-bent, according to the critic, translation is really something apart from the other arts. But it is, indisputably, an art. Too often people have defined it in terms that only partially apply, for it has never received the massive attention given to other aspects of literature. It follows, it serves, it is the squire of the arts, but it was Sancho Panza who made Don Quixote possible.

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Speculation

HOWARD NEMEROV

Prepare for death. But how can you prepare
For death? Suppose it isn't an exam,
But more like the Tavern Scene in Henry Four,
Or that other big drunk, the Symposium?

Remember, everybody will be there,
Sooner or later at first, then all at once.
Maybe the soul at death becomes a star.
Maybe the galaxies are one great dance,

Maybe. For as earth's population grows,
So does the number of the unfixed stars,
Exploding from the sempiternal Rose
Into the void of an expanding universe.

If it be so, it doesn't speak well for
The social life hereafter: faster than light
The souls avoid each other, as each star
Speeds outward, goes out, or goes out of sight.

✪ HOWARD NEMEROV is preparing a new book of poetry, *The Western Approaches,* as well as his *Collected Poems,* both to be published by the University of Chicago Press. He will be a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar in 1975-76.

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Musings in Munich

RUTH AND PETER GAY

THE AMERICAN VISITOR TO MUNICH finds himself compelled to make comparisons to America, most of them invidious. Tourists, of course, are notoriously gullible; they are inclined to measure the day-to-day irritations of their ordinary lives against the spectacular pleasures of their nomadic shelters. At home, one lives with failures—with corruption, ugliness, dirt, inefficiency; traveling, one finds one's judgment seduced by an ostentatious parade of successes. The traveler is, after all, not responsible for the unsolved, frequently invisible, social problems of the foreign city he so hastily inspects. But we know all this, and we have been cautious. Yet as old city dwellers we have been reminded of something we thought irrecoverably lost. And the comparisons that Munich has invited us to make have grown more pointed with every day that passes.

As we write this, we have lived here for more than six weeks; we have graduated from the status of the tourist to that of visitor. We read the daily newspaper, shop in the *Supermarkt* and the neighborhood bakery, have our hair cut nearby, do our laundry in the basement of our apartment house, and listen to the local radio. Our closest link, almost our only link, to America, in addition to letters from the family, is the 6:00 P.M. news broadcast by the American Forces Network. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* is all very well, but if one wants to wallow in Watergate or its remains, one needs one's daily dose of bulletins from Washington and San Clemente. To paraphrase President Kennedy, *Wir sind Münchner,* at least for a season. And Munich, far more than any American

✪ RUTH and PETER GAY have been living in Munich since September. They will move next to Oxford where Mr. Gay will be a Fellow at Wolfson College.

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urban agglomeration in our experience, is a true city. It is a reminder, to us, of what urban life can be and for many of us once was. It does what drugs are supposed to do and do not: it expands the mind. In America, a few shrinking islands of urbanity apart, city dwellers have become the servants of the massive moloch they call Cleveland, Los Angeles, or New York. Here in Europe, in Munich more than elsewhere, the old and proper relationship has been preserved—or, rather, painstakingly restored: the city serves its inhabitants.

We Americans do not really love cities. It is far too simple to say that they are not lovable, and so we have fled them; in large measure, we have fled them and they have become unlovable. What G. K. Chesterton said of Christianity we may say of our urbanity: it is not that it has been tried and found wanting, but that it has been found hard and not tried. Admittedly, to love the city today, in America, is to affront the appalling evidence, to invite the charge of nostalgia. But our walks around Munich have convinced us that urban life need not be the nightmare it is at home. Our American prophecies of urban doom promise to be true enough, but they are self-fulfilling prophecies. Our Cassandras are enjoying themselves too much.

The evidence *is* certainly appalling. It has been a long time since we, in America, have taken pleasure in the urban tempo, the peculiarly urban cycle of the seasons. *Stadtluft macht frei,* that old German saying, sounds to us like heavy-handed irony: city air, far from making us free, makes us timid and irritable. And as our urban pleasures have receded, we have begun to question our memories. When we were young, even New York, no matter how hard to encompass, was an exhilarating collection of distinct and intimate neighborhoods. It was a place where people lived and raised families. Today, the old neighborhoods have made way for high-rise apartment houses, boxes piled upon boxes, which induce only one response—a sense of desolation, and permit only one prediction—a crime rate mounting, at a fixed proportion, with every story. If the old houses have remained intact, they are inhabited now by new nationalities, new generations, too new to create in more than the most rudimentary fashion that

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sense of coherence and belonging in one's immediate surroundings that make a city safe, clean, and, above all, interesting.

The plight of the American city is in part a tribute to the irreparable wastages of time. In 1893, when the influential and observant German museum director Wilhelm von Bode visited the United States, he exclaimed over the quality of American workmanship, the comforts of American transportation, the vitality of American towns—all, he noted, far superior to anything that German cities had to offer. Today, pupil has become teacher, and those wry old jokes about the benefits of losing a war force themselves upon the walker in Munich, where much was physically wrecked in the early 1940s, and much was spiritually debased by the Nazis even before. But the sheer deterioration of costly investments—of old rolling stock and old building sites—can explain only part of America's travail. Of course, the Munich subways are superior to the New York system—they are so much newer. But there are other, deeper reasons. To permit the New York subways to become filthy, abrasive, and increasingly dangerous, to tolerate the primal scream of those brakes, is to make a statement about one's priorities. The Munich subways are not overwhelming palaces of the proletariat, as in Moscow, but they are inviting and flattering places to be in. They are built, of course, of durable materials; yet the emphasis, somehow, is not on their durability but on their sumptuousness: polished granite blocks for the station platforms, interesting colored tiles facing walls and columns, shaded lighting, pleasant surprises, a mural in one station, wall decorations in another. How it will be in seventy-five years we cannot know, but for the moment we are not yet walking on a carpet of discarded chewing gum.

We said that Americans do not really love the city. But our antiurban mentality is anything but simple. It is actually the result of a strange alliance between grim-faced preachers of the rural virtues and cheerful, self-confident city planners; between those who actually detest the city and those who profess to love it. They have cemented their alliance—the verb is deliberate—by their tendentious use of the word "nature." The agrarian propagandist calls the city unnatural because it is remote from greenery,

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the out-of-doors, the fresh air, and "natural" food that presumably only the countryside can provide. Only people are missing from this portrait of nature. And most urban planners, with their impeccable drawings, their appealing and dishonest little sculptures—developments on table tops—have the same conception of nature. Robert Moses is not the only planner essentially ignorant of what city life is about. The ultimate ideal of his kind may be summed up as a tract of land covered with cement—for roads, parking lots, even parks—flanking boring skyscrapers or reaching out to remote places of recreation. The very idea of Jones Beach, imposing, distant and exhausting, gives weight to the charge that the modern city is indeed unnatural. But city life is, or can be, natural if we cherish man; it is the highest state that human nature has achieved. The refreshment that the true city offers is close by, easy to reach and enjoyable to consume; the true city invites its inhabitant to socialize, to move about, to *use* his own neighborhood. If the weather or distance make walking impracticable, it offers transportation that will not destroy, in advance, the pleasures it was designed to make accessible. The notorious brutality of the New York bus driver, which perhaps exceeds the anonymous brutality of the subway, is a grating and peremptory invitation to stay at home. The American city dweller's home is not his castle exactly but his fortress, from which he makes occasional anxious forays to visit other fortresses, only to return to his own, scarcely refreshed and mainly relieved. Yet it is precisely what happens between the two terminal points that can make city life the civilized achievement it should be.

They understand these things better in Europe, and in Munich better than, say, in Frankfurt. Munich, of course, is very old, much older than any American city. And like many European cities it exhibits traces of its long past here and there: a thirteenth-century tower, three much-modernized fourteenth-century city gates, and that late fifteenth-century monument, the Frauenkirche, which is its most famous church, visited sight, and conspicuous emblem. But while these historic glimpses, and a few others, lend Munich a certain glamour and dignity, they are largely factitious. For the Munich that has led us to these reflections, the Munich that has

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been so intelligently restored since the devastation of Allied bombings thirty years ago, was largely the creation of the early nineteenth century. In fact, the lavishly decorated Gothic city hall, which the current Baedeker a little testily calls "pretentious—*anspruchsvoll*" was put up between 1867 and 1908. The Neue Rathaus has historical value as evidence for the misplaced medievalism of the late nineteenth century, and the architectural merit of an ambitious wedding cake, but it is, in its very pretentiousness, a sign of a persistent vitality, an exercise in traditionalism that experiments with the good and the bad alike. And this sense of urban vitality, which is so often a blight on the imagination, has served Munich well. It has led the city administration to raze only what could not be preserved, to restore what could be restored, and to make compromises between restoration and innovation when this seemed appropriate. One brilliant instance of this flexibility is the work on the Frauenkirche, a powerfully simple late Gothic structure, with sturdy brick walls, and with twin towers capped by modified onion domes. In 1944 and 1945 it suffered extensive damage which necessitated fundamental general repairs. The building itself stands largely as it stood before the war, but the stained glass, brilliantly designed, is candidly contemporary—not abstract, as the stained glass at Coventry Cathedral, but figurative, employing customary ecclesiastical motifs and mildly expressionist distortion in the figures. The windows are a moving, deliberate echo of traditional glass, combined with unmistakable modernity—the old and the new, mutually supportive and wholly unapologetic.

For us, the restoration of the Frauenkirche is the incarnation of the urban spirit at its best—it supports the longing for continuity without getting mired in immobility. It accepts the need for innovation without showing contempt for survivals. A city is a living being, shedding, acquiring, changing, ever incomplete. That holds for all cities. The difference between exhilarating urbanity and depressing necropolis is, once again, the choice of priorities—the question of who is to be master. Munich has visibly made its choice in two ways, first by returning to a very old urban pattern, the mall, second by adopting a very modern urban

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device, the subway. Both are triumphs; both deserve close study on the part of Americans, especially on the part of those who have written off the city as obsolete. "Munich," proclaims a brochure of the Munich tourist office, "has rediscovered the pedestrian." This is the simple truth. Most of the old city has become a pedestrian's paradise: wide streets, alive with strollers and street vendors, giving access to stores, churches, and cafés, underscore an old, almost forgotten truth: that city life should gratify rather than abrade the senses. In these privileged zones, sight and hearing, even touch and smell, find their reward. These zones were not established without resistance: merchants in Munich—as on Madison Avenue—feared that to banish automobiles would harm trade. They have been proved wrong. Shoppers, at ease with themselves, crowd the stores and restaurants on their path. And there will be more *Fussgängerzonen*. The city is expanding them from the present 50,000 quadrameters to 70,000 quadrameters by next spring, and will, as with the others, provide interesting walkways with informal mosaics, bulky attractive hexagonal flower pots, and elegantly designed lamps. The subways, which we have already praised, strike us as downright improbable with their dependable schedules, clean trains, attractive stations, and, above all, their blessed quietness. With an excellent network of buses and streetcars, they take you everywhere, promptly, and, we are tempted to add, humanely. Munich is a city, one feels, about which much thought has been expended in the right quarters.

Not surprisingly, Munich is a city of fairs and expositions. It is rich in museums, and unsurpassed in its coverage of nineteenth-century German painters—Lenbach and Böcklin and Leibl and dozens of others—whose reputation has always been far higher here than abroad; like certain German wines, they do not travel well. But beyond this, organizations of all sorts crowd into the city to hold their meetings here; the October schedule lists no fewer than twenty-three such congresses, including one on "containerization," one by the German Association of Psychiatrists and one—carefully separated from the first by over a week—by the German Association of Psychotherapy and Depth Psychology. An impressive international food fair, the IKOFA, which lasted

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for a week during September, was, in its appearance, both a tribute to Munich itself and to the general sense of human importance that we, as patient Americans, have almost lost. Over fifteen hundred stalls, from forty-six countries, displayed an immense variety of foods; the first three of the twenty halls were given over to machinery for preparing, packaging, and vending food. The visitor saw here, as a novelty, what is all too familiar in America: the snack bar, in all its denaturing, cooling, heating, and serving aspects. But to move past the clanking, flashing machinery to the national exposition halls was to move from the mechanical to the human. Here we were steadily reminded that, even to hardened professionals, what sells food is its natural texture, color, and aroma. And what charms the eye most are the simplest artifacts. Gone were the steely machines, and everywhere there were baskets, pottery, pyramids of fresh fruit, wine in jugs, beer in kegs. The packaging may have been efficient in some factory on the Yangtse, but even the People's Republic of China displayed its tea in fragile porcelain dishes, and conducted its business in red-lacquered pagodas. The European economic community may well be all for price fixing in Brussels, but French pancakes, Westphalian hams, Scottish marmalade derived their appeal—and saleability—from their local origins. The evidence of a stubborn humanity here in the face of overwhelming political, economic, and technological forces made us think, as Munich had, that perhaps man as a social being was not obsolete after all. This was not Munich, of course, that we saw in these halls, but it was a reminder that despite Europe's infatuation and fascination with the mechanization of life in America, it is not yet ready to follow us to the terrible logical conclusion that gives us the same hamburger across three thousand miles of highway. The wealth in breads that our local bakery displays for our choice every day—not one loaf doctored to make us grow twelve ways—only underscores that reminder.

Munich is not perfect, and it is significantly least perfect where it has ventured furthest from its traditional moorings. Much of the new building, though architecturally undistinguished, continues the line of urban serenity with its slightly curving blocks and its stuccoed three- or four-story apartment houses. But here or there,

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especially in the outskirts, Munich has gone hypermodern, with results as disastrous financially as they are aesthetically. The area around the Olympic Stadium is a chilling instance of this failure: the Olympic Stadium itself, and its satellite halls, are playful, highly individual. Its characteristic, looming, irregular plastic tents covering parts of the stadium and some of the walkways are cheerful and ingenious. But the cluster of jutting apartment houses, fourteen to nineteen stories tall, add up to an arid desert, defying all the architects' desperate efforts to provide some variety and color with cunningly designed fountains and ingeniously planted trees. The slabs of concrete, piled with little constructive imagination on top of other slabs, and the spaghetti of concrete access walk-ways, are impressive abstract forms. They must have looked stunning as models, at the presentation. But they are lifeless; the eye thirsts for color so much that an occasional orange awning sheltering a balcony from the sun refreshes the parched observer in search of something—anything—that will restore his sense of humanity. Most of those who choose to live out here profess to like it, but many of the apartments are empty. The Olympische Dorf may be a fascinating place to visit, but understandably not very many people want to live there.

A visit to the Olympic Village is a confrontation. Munich, however lively and cheerful, is haunted by ghosts. In front of Connollystrasse 31 there is a granite plaque, decorated with flowers, commemorating the murder of the Israeli athletes there in September 1972. But Munich's ghosts are older than that. This was Hitler's city, headquarters of the Nazi movement; it was punished dreadfully by Allied bombs. A recent book on Munich's historic facades notes that forty-five percent of the city's buildings were destroyed in the war. Hitler's name rarely appears; people speak of the "Third Reich," with heavy, ironic quotation marks, or "Die NS-Zeit." Not long ago, one of us asked for a particular title at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek only to be informed, with a single word, that it was no longer available: "*verbrannt*—burned," this with a slight smile. Sometimes the visitor gets the feeling that what has just struck him as a certain lapse in taste was actually a very

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real effort to master a difficult part of the past. Quite soon, there will be an auction of some of Göring's effects which, it is estimated, will realize only about one hundred and twenty thousand marks, a mere fraction of the vast loot he accumulated during his dizzy days of power. The auction house has taken an aggressive-defensive attitude toward the whole business—it is about time, they inform the public, that we look at the art and artifacts of the "NS-time" a little more open-mindedly—"unbefangener"—than before. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a serious and politically rather flexible newspaper, has a regular feature, "Mit der S-Bahn wandern," which proposes little excursions into the neighborhood of Munich that one can take with the "Schnell-Bahn," something like the old New York El, which supplements the subway in the city and its environs. One such excursion, discussed in some detail recently, is to the "grave of the Rembrandt–German," the litterateur Julius Langbehn, whose virulent political diatribe of 1890, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, was an immensely popular book for some years, growing more and more poisonously anti-Semitic edition after edition. Langbehn is buried at Puch, a little town just north of Munich. The article describes Langbehn's book, correctly enough, as a "bestseller"—it is the word the Germans use—which went through forty-three editions in three years. In that book, the article notes, still correctly but not quite candidly, Langbehn championed *völkische* ideas and "combated materialism, industrialization, and the semi-educated"; he was, it seems, "a voice crying in the wilderness" for the "renewal of the German spirit." One needs to know a little about German history to give specific content to the kind of *völkische* ideas Langbehn actually advocated; as for the kind of spiritual renewal he hoped for, that became clear enough after 1933. Some reading between the lines is a useful, in fact necessary activity here: the long and respectful articles published in the local newspapers on the occasion of Heidegger's eighty-fifth birthday lifted a corner of the curtain normally covering Heidegger's scandalous behavior in the early days of Nazi rule; they alluded to it, but scarcely explored it. One has the feeling, reading these tributes, that the authors would think themselves dishonest to say nothing about Heidegger's cring-

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ing declarations of loyalty to the new, triumphant regime, yet uncomfortable about saying too much. Like Richard Strauss, after whom Munich has named a street, Heidegger remains an asset to German *Kultur*—tarnished, one might think, but apparently still better than nothing.

Yet it would be paranoid to speak about a conspiracy of silence. The broad Dachauer Strasse still leads, as it always has, to Dachau, and Dachau has a memorial now where the concentration camp once stood. This *Gedenkstätte* is listed in the monthly guide to Munich, complete with the opening and closing hours, modes of transportation, and the times when one can see a documentary film about the camp. And the Baedeker for Munich (most recent edition, 1972) gives the memorial the full treatment, complete with map and adjectives. Bishops make pious visits there, to pray, and to have their pictures taken for the daily newspapers. The armed policeman who stands, gun on his shoulder, guarding the Jewish community center is on the lookout not for German Neo-Nazis but for Arab terrorists. Anti-Semitism is not only illegal in Western Germany, it is also scarcely visible; more than one Jewish resident in Munich told us that "Germany is the least anti-Semitic country in the world." Their testimony carries weight; it is better grounded than anything the most keen-eyed visitor could offer. And it too has entered our musings in Munich. Nothing is easier than to remain frozen in attitudes serviceable, even appropriate, a generation ago—to remain firm in the resolve made after the first anguished discovery of the death camps, never to set foot in Germany. Nothing, we quickly add, is more comprehensible. But to live here is to discover in small ways and large the essential anachronism of such an attitude. What has made it anachronistic is the sheer passage of time; perhaps half of the people whose city we share were born after Hitler died, and one learns quickly enough that, no matter what one's first visceral responses, one has no right to assume that all those who are older supported him. To ponder the names of the streets, the conversations on the bus, the repairs on public buildings, the stories in the newspapers, is to realize that Hitler was a monstrous scourge for Germany, too.

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We have met, not only the children of Nazi butchers but also those of their victims. Our German friends are too discreet to make anything of this, but the Nazis did not murder Jews alone. Their rule ripped apart the texture of German life, and it has taken more than a generation to repair it, though not wholly, not yet, not for a very long time to come. In the light of what Jews in Munich have told us—"Germany is the least anti-Semitic country in the world"—the residual kindness to Heidegger, amnesia about Langbehn, and pride in Richard Strauss appear far less as an apology for their weakness, let alone an endorsement of their ideas, than as one possible, very human response to a heavy, life-long burden. There are many ways of coming to terms with one's past, and, except for total, vengeful denial, in Munich one sees them all.

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The Uncertain Future of the Humanistic Educational Ideal

LIONEL TRILLING

In the summer of 1974 the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies held a two-week conference on education, or, to be more particular and cite the phrase by which the conference was announced, on The Educated Person in the Contemporary World. *It was planned that the first four meetings of the conference should address themselves to certain specific topics which bore upon the general subject and that the discussion at these meetings should be initiated by prepared papers. I was asked to deal with the question of what were the factors in contemporary society which worked for or against the likelihood that, in the late twentieth century, there would emerge an effectual ideal of education which would be integrally related to the humanistic educational traditions of the past. What follows is my effort to respond to this all too momentous question.*

Partly for Socratic reasons, but chiefly because it is my actual belief, I shall take the view that at the present time in American society, there are few factors to be perceived, if any at all, which make it likely that within the next quarter-century there will be articulated in a convincing and effectual way an educational ideal that has a positive and significant connection with the humanistic educational traditions of the past. At the moment, it seems to me that the indications point the opposite way and urge upon us the conclusion that our society will tend increasingly to alienate itself from the humanistic educational ideal.

Yet, although I would argue the necessity of this conclusion from the evidence before us, I think it necessary to stipulate, as I have done, that the state of affairs to which I refer is one that

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exists "at the moment." I wish, that is, to express my sense of how readily the winds of American educational doctrine shift, and that they do so at the behest of all manner of circumstances which are hard to discern, let alone predict. It is true that as I look toward the future, it appears improbable that the present situation will change; I do not think that circumstances are likely to arise that will call into being an ideal of education closely and positively related to the humanistic educational traditions of the past. And by this prognostication I am saddened, the more so when I consider how very little time has gone by since the humanistic educational traditions of the past were invoked in the formulation of an educational theory that seemed to have established itself very firmly in our culture, winning at least the passive assent of the educated middle class and the general approval of the intellectual class, as well as the profound loyalty of some of the best elements of the academic profession. Yet I reflect that the authority of this admirable theory of education was won as swiftly and as unpredictably as it was lost: that this was possible restrains, in some small degree, the impulse of pessimism.

A Columbia man is perhaps in a particularly good position to comment on the impermanence of educational theory, especially of such theory as takes account of the traditional humanistic conceptions of what education properly is. The history of my university over most of the last hundred years might be told in terms of its alternations of attitude toward these conceptions, and perhaps it will serve our purpose if we have before us a brief summary of its career of ceaseless backing and filling.

In 1889 the Columbia trustees deliberated over the expediency of abolishing Columbia College—that is to say, of doing away with the undergraduate school which was the original part of the rapidly proliferating institution and which was still its core. Because of the accelerating tendency of the College toward becoming a university (which it did at last by statutory charter in 1896) the undergraduate school was increasingly referred to by the absurd phrase, "the College proper"; sometimes it was called the School of the Arts. The proposal to abolish the College proper had been made by the then president, Frederick Barnard. He

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wanted his institution to get on with its new commitment to scholarly and professional graduate education, which was being shaped more or less on the then much-admired German model.

Had President Barnard succeeded in getting rid of the undergraduate college, it cannot be said that the loss to learning would have been a grievous one. And perhaps even the loss to education could not have been thought momentous. The College was a small, old-fashioned school, its curriculum limited to Latin, Greek, mathematics of an outmoded sort, a little metaphysics, a very little natural science. Looking back at it now, perhaps the best that can be said for it was that it was not committed to early professionalism and specialization.

In the event, Columbia College, the College proper, was not abolished. But it was kept under constant suspicion and constraint, and in 1902 Nicholas Murray Butler put forward in his presidential report his belief that "four years is too long a time to devote to the college course as now constituted, especially for students who are to remain in University residence as technical or professional students." And in his report of 1903, he proposed that a Columbia student be required to do only two years of college work before going on to a graduate school. In 1905 Butler was able to announce with pride that this "professional option," as it came to be called, had actually been made available to undergraduates. He summed up the meaning of the new arrangement in the following words: "The Faculty of Columbia College say that to prescribe graduation from a four year college as a *sine qua non* for the professional study of law, medicine, engineering, or teaching is not a good thing but a bad thing."

Why was it not a good thing but a bad thing? Butler was in no doubt about the answer. In those days what we call liberal education or, even more commonly nowadays, general education, often went under the name of "culture," and Butler said flatly that "any culture that is worthy of the name . . . will be increased, not diminished, by bringing to an end the idling and dawdling that now characterize so much of American higher education."

But, as I say, the winds of American educational doctrine are never steady. No sooner had "idling and dawdling" been brought

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under control by cutting down the number of college years through "professional option" than Butler began to wonder whether he quite liked the new efficiency after all. In his report of 1909 he offers dark reflections on what he now calls the "cult of the will," which, he says, "has gone far enough just now for the good of mankind." Suddenly it seems to him that young men are in too much of a hurry to become lawyers, doctors, engineers, and teachers, and he recalls nostalgically that the four-year undergraduate college did after all make possible what he no longer speaks of as "idling and dawdling," but, rather, as "the generous and reflective use of leisure." He is explicit in saying that it is not enough to be a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, or a teacher; one must be something else in addition—a cultured man. We understand that he really wants to say that one ought to be a cultured *gentleman,* but he is canny enough to know that the time has already gone by when one might conjure with that word.

Butler's change of heart did not immediately revise the Columbia situation. But a decade later, after the First World War, for a variety of reasons which we must not take time to consider, "professional option" became much less popular than it had formerly been, and the "generous and reflective use of leisure" established itself as a proper mode of life for the young men of Columbia College. It was John Erskine, a scholar of Renaissance English literature, who gave it its most effectual form by initiating what elsewhere came to be known as the Great Books Program; at Columbia, the Great Books were read in a rather exigent two-year course for juniors and seniors which was called General Honors and remembered with gratitude and pride by everyone who was permitted to take it. (Not the least attractive aspect of the course was what would nowadays be called its "format"—it was organized in groups of about fifteen; two instructors presided over the discussion and were under tacit obligation to express their own differences with each other; the groups met, with a touch of ceremoniousness, once a week, on Wednesday evening, presumably for two hours but usually for longer than that.) Erskine was not a person of the finest intellectual temper; he stood on the edge of flamboyance and at a distance from sig-

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nificant achievement in his undertakings as poet, novelist, musician, and critic. But he was genuinely committed to the idea of intelligence; he wrote an essay which was famous in its day, its whole substance lying perhaps in its title, "The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent." He believed that the best way to make oneself intelligent and thus to prepare oneself to function well as a citizen or as the practitioner of one of the professions was through a happy and intimate acquaintance with the great intellectual and artistic works of the past, books chiefly, but music and the visual arts as well.

Erskine put his mark on Columbia, and, indeed, on educational theory throughout the country. Mortimer Adler as a very young graduate student was one of the first teachers in that enchanting General Honors course that Erskine had devised, and the mention of his name will suggest the response to the Great Books idea at the University of Chicago and at St. John's College and at the innumerable other schools that were led to believe, though of course with varying degress of intensity, that the study of the preeminent works of the past, chiefly those in the humanities, with what this study implied of the development of the "whole man"—no one then thought of the necessity of saying the "whole person"—was the best possible direction that undergraduate education could take.

It is not my intention to review in anything like full detail the career of the ideal of general education in this country over the last half-century, an ideal which, as I have said, was consciously humanistic in its emphasis and which insisted in the traditional humanistic way that the best citizen is the person who has learned from the great minds and souls of the past how beautiful reason and virtue are and how difficult to attain. The purpose of my historical reference has been only to put us in mind of how recently it could be conceived that a traditionally humanistic education had a bearing upon contemporary American life and deserved to be given an honored place in it. I recall my experience as a college teacher through the thirties, forties, and fifties as having been a peculiarly fortunate one: I inhabited an academic community which was informed by a sense not merely of scholarly,

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but of educational purpose, and which was devoted to making ever more cogent its conception of what a liberal and humane education consists in. I know how eager will be the impulse of many to match my experience at Columbia College with their own at their own places; it is indeed a striking and impressive circumstance that in our country in our time it has been possible for there to be so pertinacious a concern with questions of what is best for young minds to be engaged by, with how they may best be shaped through what they read—or look at or listen to—and think about. It was a Columbia colleague of mine who wrote the classic account of the part played in American society by its tendency to anti-intellectualism, but Richard Hofstadter knew that this made a paradox, that in American society there is also a strong, if complex, disposition to admire and sustain the life of knowledge and thought.

I speak of the thirties, the forties, and the fifties. But by the sixties, something had happened to reduce the zeal for such education as set store by its being general, and defined its purpose as being the cultivation of general intelligence in the young. For reasons which, to my knowledge, have not yet been formulated, but which I cannot doubt to have been of great cultural moment, this concern lost its characteristic urgency. At Columbia College, the consciousness of this change in our educational ethos was made explicit when, in 1964, the dean of the College, David Truman, asked Daniel Bell to look into the state of general education in the College and report on it to the faculty. I shall not touch upon the substance of Bell's brilliant report, which was later published under the title of *The Reforming of General Education*. I wish only to commemorate as a sad and significant event in the culture of our time the response of the Columbia College faculty to the questions the report raised and sought to answer. From my long experience of the College, I can recall no meetings on an educational topic that were so poorly attended and so lacking in vivacity as those in which the report was considered. If I remember correctly, these meetings led to no action whatever, not even to the resolve to look further into the matter. Through some persuasion of the *Zeitgeist,* the majority of the

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faculty were no longer concerned with general education in the large and honorific meaning of the phrase.

Nothing could be further from my intention than to say that they had become cynical about their function as teachers. Actually, indeed, it was in some part the seriousness with which they took their teacherly function that led them to withdraw their interest from the large questions of educational theory; periodically the answers to these questions become platitudinous and boring, mere pious protestations, and at such times a teacher might naturally and rightly feel that he does most for his students not by speculating about what shape and disposition their minds ought eventually to have, but by simply pressing upon them the solid substance and the multitudinous precisions of his own particular intellectual discipline. I think there can be no doubt, too, that the growing indifference to the ideals of general education was in some considerable part an aspect of the new mode of political anxiety that was manifesting itself at the time. The urgency of the problems, the sordidness of the problems, which pressed in upon us from the surrounding world made speculation on educational theory seem almost frivolous.

But no sooner have we taken note of how things stood in 1964 and in the years of violent disruption of university life that followed—in the brief compass of this paper I shall not dwell on the latter—than we have to observe that the doctrinal winds are shifting once more, that the feeling about general education is changing yet again: we perceive that in certain circles, the circumferences of which tend to enlarge themselves, general education is being represented as a subject of ultimate and urgent importance.

Among those who have a professional concern with education, there is now a strong inclination to make the humanities salient in the ideal curriculums they project. Of the three categories into which the American system of higher education divides all learning, we can scarcely fail to be aware that the physical sciences, in their relation to general education, have come to be regarded with at least ambivalence and perhaps in a more pejorative way than that; their own moral nature is thought of

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as at best highly problematical, and not much is expected of what they can do for the moral nature of those who study them. It is no less plain that there has been a marked diminution in the confidence that the the social sciences commanded only a few years ago. But on all sides we witness a renewed commitment to the promise of the humanities. Of the three categories of learning, this is the one that lays least claim to immediate practicality, to being effectual in what we call problem-solving, yet among those who are prophetically concerned with education the feeling seems to grow, and to be affirmed in conference after conference, in seminar after seminar, that in the humanities is to be found the principle that must inform our educational enterprise, the principle that directs us to see to the development of the critical intelligence, of the critical moral intelligence, without which—so it is increasingly said—we shall perish, or at least painfully deteriorate.

I speak of our society as being at the present time animated by a renewed interest in the kind of higher education whose moral content will help us in the right ordering of social and political existence. This is the interest in and the conception of higher education that is entertained by the educated middle classes and made articulate by those among them—among *us*—who have a professional concern with the process and goals of education and who are habituated to connect them with the welfare of society at large. But we can scarcely fail to be aware that this large, ultimate, and ideal concern is concomitant with, and possibly a remonstrative response to, an interest in higher education that has both a different source and a different purpose. What I refer to is the interest in higher education of people for whom its salient characteristic is that they have not had any of it.

Of the resentment that this deprivation arouses, we are nowadays all aware, but perhaps we know less particularly than we might what it is that the grievance entails. We all recognize that in our society higher education is the most dependable means of upward social mobility. Through it may be acquired the technical knowledge and the conceptual aptitude that make it possible for a person to enter the professions and to enjoy the

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economic-social advantages that the practice of them entails. It is a distressing aspect of the situation that many members of disadvantaged groups have come to think of education, not as the means of acquiring technical training or the preparation for technical training, but merely as a process of accreditation, with an economic-social end in view, which has no relation to actual academic achievement. How much this is ignorance and how much cynicism is perhaps not immediately relevant here.

But the grievance of those who have been debarred from higher education is not wholly understood if it is thought of as having reference to economic deprivation alone. Those who feel the grievance—or at least many of those who feel it—are not merely saying that because they have not had college educations they cannot make as much money as those who have. Nor are they quite talking about their unsatisfactory social status only in the simple way that associates it immediately and directly with income. Their grievance is social in a more complex sense, in the sense that it is cultural. Its nature is vividly described in a book called *The Hidden Injuries of Class,* by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb. The senior author of this work proposes the idea that, although all enlightened people abundantly understand that the division of any society into classes implies that some classes as compared with others are disadvantaged or deprived or (to use the term proposed by the book's title) injured, the range of the injuries extends further than is commonly supposed. The overt injuries of class are the short supply of goods, of sustenance, physical comfort, leisure, security, freedom from constraint, and so on. But there are other injuries of class of a less manifest kind: for example, Sennett suggests that increasingly members of the American urban working class feel themselves to be in an unsatisfactory relation to high culture. So that there will be no misapprehension of what Sennett means, I quote his strikingly explicit statement of the situation: "The changes in [the] lives [of these people] mean more to them than a chance, or a failure, to acquire middle-class *things.* For them, history is challenging them and their children to become 'cultured,' in the intellectual's sense of that word, if they want to achieve respect in the new

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American terms; and toward that challenge they feel deeply ambivalent."

Let us pass over the negative side of this ambivalence to consider only its positive component. These urban workers want to become educated persons; they believe that being educated is to their advantage. They do not exactly know why this is so, and Sennett, the professional observer and recorder of such desires and beliefs as they entertain, cannot say with any definiteness what the advantage might be. As I say, he rules out crass economic advantage and such social gains as follow directly from it. He seems to suggest that the desire to be educated is associated with the diminished force of the ethos of class, that the people who think it would be good for them and their children to be "cultured" feel that they have lost a class idiom and a class bond—they want to be "cultured" because they have been deprived of the community once provided by class. They think of themselves, that is, as postulants for membership in a new, larger, and more complex community to which they are as yet extraneous. They conceive education, higher education, as the process of initiation into membership in that community.

And to conceive of education in this way is perhaps not to conceive of education as fully as might be, but surely it is not a mistaken conception: we who are concerned to discover what it is that, in the contemporary world, makes a truly educated person, cannot be greatly at odds with the view of the matter taken by those members of the urban working class whom Sennett interviewed. If we consider, for instance, that the word *initiation* carries archaic and "primitive" overtones, bringing to mind tribal procedures and mystery cults, we may suppose that a great deal of what we will say in the discussion of our subject will disclose our assumption that the educated person is exactly an initiate who began as a postulant, passed to a higher level of experience, and became worthy of admission into the company of those who are thought to have transcended the mental darkness and inertia in which they were previously immersed. This assumption has always existed somewhere in the traditional humanistic ideal of education.

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But if, following Sennett's lead, I suggest that there is an affinity between the way in which higher education is conceived by traditional humanism and the way in which it is conceived, instinctually as it were, by a significant group of uneducated people who want to be educated, have I not in effect said that the educational ideal of traditional humanism can count upon being ceaselessly sustained and renewed? And if I have done that, then how can I maintain the opinion expressed at the beginning of this paper, that there is but little likelihood that in our time there will be articulated in a convincing and effectual way an educational ideal that has a positive connection with the humanistic educational traditions of the past?

I have used the word *initiation* to suggest the ritually prescribed stages by which a person is brought into a community whose members are presumed to have attained to a state of being superior to his own. Such ritual procedures typically involve a test, which, by reason of its difficulty or danger or pain or hardship, is commonly called an ordeal. It is from this exigent experience that the process of initiation is thought to derive its validity. The ordeal is presumed to bring about a change in the postulant, a state of illumination and power. In the German word for education, *Bildung*, a word which is almost comically notorious for the multiplicity of its meanings, which make it the despair of translators, both the idea of initiation and the idea of the ordeal are among its significations. Hegel, for example, speaks of *Bildung* as a "terrible discipline" by which mankind is shaped toward its higher next stage of existence. It is of course true that *Bildung* can mean gentle and gradual things, such as *development, growth, generation,* and achieved things, such as *structure* and *organization,* and, going beyond these, *cultivation, culture, civilization,* but it also means *fashioning, forming, shaping,* and it means as well the state of *being fashioned, being formed, being shaped,* which, in the making of a human being, as in the making of a Tyger, if Blake is telling the truth, are processes in which there is a fashioner, a former, a shaper, who puts forth strenuous effort against the recalcitrance of the material he is dealing with, and that the material—which is to say the person—submits to being dealt

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with, consents to undergo the ordeal of being fashioned, formed, shaped.

If I am right in saying that humanistic educational traditions of the past were grounded in strenuous effort and that the idea of ordeal was essential to them, it will be obvious, I think, that our American culture will not find these educational traditions congenial. Perhaps other national cultures still follow their own traditions in being less distressed than ours by what the humanistic education of the past entailed in the way of strict sanction and required submission. In England, for example, *pupil* is still not a compromised word as it is in this country. The English use it quite neutrally except perhaps where it carries subtle overtones of celebration, as when an established scholar refers to the distinguished man who was his tutor at the university by saying, "I was a pupil of So-and-so," which is to say, "He taught me; I learned from him." But, in America, an excellent handbook of linguistic usage tells us that one should not refer to anyone over the age of (I think) twelve as a *pupil*. To apply the word to a person who has passed the canonical age can only be considered derogatory in that it implies being taught or being required to learn, and thus denies the autonomy made manifest in the word *student*.

Very likely this feeling on the part of many Americans that being taught or required to learn is an arbitrary denial of autonomy goes far toward explaining the state of primary and secondary education in our country. Everyone seems to act as if that cause is wholly and irretrievably lost and to conclude that the best way of dealing with this significant defeat of the democratic ideal is to put it behind us, to say nothing more about it, and to place our hope for education wholly in its higher branches. At the several conferences and seminars that I have attended through the past year, all of which put their emphasis on the humanistic aspects of education, it was taken for granted that the effectual process of education begins at age eighteen, upon entrance into college; any questioning of this assumption, any attempt to suggest that the quality of higher education might have some relation to the quality of primary and secondary education was unfailingly met with irritated resistance as being an obstructive irrelevance.

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This would have greatly surprised—would have appalled—John Milton or any theorist of humanistic education of the past.

Yet will we be fair to our society if we let those old theorists of humanistic education have the last word? Will we be doing justice to our system of education in its totality if we take the view that we fail in our duty to our young people because we do not see to it that they are really taught, that they are really required to learn traditional substantive subjects, that they are early and compulsorily subjected to such fashioning, forming, shaping as will prepare them for further *Bildung* at the university? As I have said, there is pretty wide agreement that this is not how our primary and secondary schools understand their function. But might it not be a question whether, in the light of precisely our most conscientiously forward-looking and hopeful cultural sentiment, there is any real need for them to regard their function in this way? Consider the following estimate of young people who have entered the universities after having had the presumably inadequate training our schools give: "The present generation of young people in our universities are the best informed, the most intelligent, and the most idealistic this country has ever known. This is the experience of teachers everywhere." I am citing the opening paragraph of the *Report of the Fact-Finding Commission Appointed to Investigate the Disturbances at Columbia University in April and May 1968.* It was written by the chairman of the commission, Professor Archibald Cox of the Harvard Law School. The statement, we may presume, was not carelessly made.

Although when I first read Professor Cox's statement my response was one of natural bewilderment, upon further consideration perhaps I have come to see how Professor Cox arrived at this remarkable judgment. Ours is a culture of which a chief characteristic is its self-awareness. Not only that aspect of our culture which we refer to as "high" is largely given over to enhancing this alertness to our condition—no less intense and overt in this effort is what we might call the institutional-popular section of our culture, which includes advertising, television in its various genres, journalism in its various modes. Through the agency

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of one segment of the culture or another, there is unceasingly being borne in upon us the consciousness that we live in circumstances of an unprecedented sort. And through these agencies we are provided with the information and the attitudes that enable us to believe not only that we can properly identify the difficulties presented by the society but also that we can cope with them, at least in spirit, and that in itself our consciousness of difficulties to be coped with gives us moral distinction. The young share with their elders this alertness to our condition; and the consciousness, together with the moral validation it confers, appears in the young at an increasingly early age, the rate of social and cultural maturation having radically accelerated in recent years, doubtless as a consequence of extreme alterations in the mores of the family and in the mores of sexuality. The excitement about the problems of our world (perhaps not the less heady for being touched by apprehensiveness) and the emotions of mastery (perhaps not the less cherished for showing some color of factiousness) that are so abundantly generated in our culture make a convincing simulacrum of a serious address to, and comprehension of, the society.

In his high estimate of the young, Professor Cox accepted the simulacrum for the real thing: he celebrated as knowledge and intelligence what in actuality is merely a congeries of "advanced" public attitudes. When he made his affirmation of the enlightenment of the young, he affirmed his own enlightenment and that of others who would agree with his judgment—for it is from the young and not from his own experience that he was deriving his values, and for values to have this source is, in the view of a large part of our forward-looking culture, all the certification that is required to prove that the values are sound ones. But surely more important than the deference to youth that was implicit in Professor Cox's high estimate of the attainment of this generation of students was his readiness to accept another of the master traits of our contemporary culture: its willingness—its eagerness—to forgo the particularization of conduct. Recognizing the great store now placed on selfhood and the energies of the self, Professor Cox met and matched the culture in its

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principled indifference to the intellectual and moral forms in which the self chooses to be presented.

If we consider the roadblocks in the path of a reestablishment of traditional humanistic education, surely none is so effectually obstructing as the tendency of our culture to regard the mere energy of impulse as being in every mental and moral way equivalent and even superior to defined intention. We may remark, as exemplary of this tendency, the fate of an idea that once was salient in Western culture: the idea of "making a life," by which was meant conceiving human existence, one's own or another's, as if it were a work of art upon which one might pass judgment, assessing it by established criteria. This idea of a conceived and executed life is a very old one and was in force until relatively recently; we regard it as characteristic of the Victorian age, but it of course lasted even longer than that. It was what virtually all novels used to be about: how you were born, reared, and shaped, and then how you took over and managed for yourself as best you could. And cognate with the idea of making a life, a nicely proportioned one, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, was the idea of making a self, a good self. Yeats speaks of women dealing with their outward selves as works of art, laboring to be beautiful; just so does Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier* represent men laboring to come up to standard, to be all that men might reasonably hope to be, partly for the satisfaction of being so, partly for the discharge of rather primitive political functions.

This desire to fashion, to shape, a self and a life has all but gone from a contemporary culture whose emphasis, paradoxically enough, is so much on self. If we ask why this has come about, the answer of course involves us in a giant labor of social history. But there is one reason which can be readily isolated and which, I think, explains much. It is this: if you set yourself to shaping a self, a life, you limit yourself to that self and that life. You preclude any other kind of selfhood remaining available to you. You close out other options, other possibilities which might have been yours. Such limitation, once acceptable, now goes against the cultural grain—it is almost as if the fluidity of the contem-

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porary world demands an analogous limitlessness in our personal perspective. Any doctrine, that of the family, religion, the school, that does not sustain this increasingly felt need for a multiplicity of options and instead offers an ideal of a shaped self, a formed life, has the sign on it of a retrograde and depriving authority, which, it is felt, must be resisted.

For anyone concerned with contemporary education at whatever level, the assimilation that contemporary culture has made between social idealism, even political liberalism, and personal fluidity—a self without the old confinements—is as momentous as it is recalcitrant to correction. Among the factors in the contemporary world which militate against the formulation of an educational ideal related to the humanistic traditions of the past, this seems to me to be the most decisive.

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The Canal

GREG KUZMA

How the earth absorbs its dead
as we must learn to

Here at the canal there are giant heaps
of mud being sloshed by us
tons of dead trees and houses
reduced in the current to various minor
obstructions

Men, I am sure, will never learn to go
easy here, how even now
as we stand and watch
we dream of going elsewhere
saving ourselves
either at parties of hundreds of people
or in some mannered isolation

but we are made to die

and sleep with the fish
in somebody else's paradise
or break to pieces on some muddy bottom
in seemingly happy approval

Whales will sit on our faces
squirrels will gnaw at our finger pieces
the wind will play pipes on the ribs

✪ GREG KUZMA's latest book of poems is entitled *Good News.* He edits and publishes the Best Cellar Press Pamphlet Series and the poetry magazine *Pebble.*

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The Worst Dancers Watch Their Feet

SAMUEL HAZO

You have to watch your feet,
  but Anne has feet that think
  and memorize.
    Name any country,
  and her feet are instant citizens.
In Stratford once she danced
  with Englishmen and Englishwomen,
  learning as she stepped until
  her steps were English as the songs.
In Lebanon she showed them how.
In Greece she passed for Greek
  and passes still.
    In Italy
  and Spain, the same.
      Bazouki,
  tamburitza, oud, guitar,
  all drums from barrel thumpings
  to the marching tympany of fingers
  on a tabletop—it makes no
  difference.
    Her feet have birthright
  keys to every alphabet

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while yours speak only in American.
If music were the sea, you'd
thrash to save yourself
and slowly drown, while she
would dance each wave alone
to Burgundy without a splash
or ripple or a last look down.

✪ SAMUEL HAZO's new book is *Quartered*, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. He is director of the International Poetry Forum and professor of literature at Duquesne University.

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Starting Out in Chicago

SAUL BELLOW

WHAT WAS IT, IN THE THIRTIES, that drew an adolescent in Chicago to the writing of books? How did a young American of the depression period decide that he was, of all things, a literary artist? I use the pretentious term literary artist simply to emphasize the contrast between such an ambition and the external facts. A colossal industrial and business center, knocked flat by unemployment, its factories and even its schools closing, decided to hold a World's Fair on the shore of Lake Michigan, with towers, high rides, exhibits, Chinese rickshaws, a midget village in which there was a midget wedding every day and other lively attractions, including whores and con men and fan dancers. There was a bit of gaiety, there was quite a lot of amoebic dysentery. Prosperity did not come back. Several millions of dollars were invested in vain by businessmen and politicians. If they could be quixotic, there was no reason why college students shouldn't be impractical too. And what was the most impractical of choices in somber, heavy, growling, low-brow Chicago? Why it was to be the representative of beauty, the interpreter of the human heart, the hero of ingenuity, playfulness, personal freedom, generosity, and love. I cannot even now say that this was a bad sort of crackpot to be.

The difference between that time and this is that in the thirties crackpots were not subsidized by their families. They had to go it alone for several years. Or at least until the New Deal (thanks largely to Harry Hopkins) recognized that a great government could *buy* the solution of any problem and opened WPA projects in many parts of the country. I think it possible that Hopkins and Roosevelt, seeing how much trouble unhappy intellectuals had

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made in Russia, Germany, and Italy between 1905 and 1935, thought it a bargain to pay people twenty-three dollars a week for painting post-office murals and editing guidebooks. This plan succeeded admirably. If I am not mistaken, America continued to follow the Hopkins hint in postwar Europe and perhaps in Vietnam.

I know, for instance, that John Cheever has been conducting creative writing courses at Sing Sing. Writers and criminals have often found that they had much in common. And correctional officials seem to understand, thanks to the psychology courses they take in the universities, that it is excellent therapy to write books and that it may soften the hearts of criminals to record their experiences. Politicians, too, when they fall from power or retire, become writers or university professors. Thus Hubert Humphrey and Dean Rusk became lecturers, Eugene McCarthy became a poet, and an altogether different sort of politician, Spiro Agnew, a novelist. Interviewed not long ago in the *New York Times*, Mr. Agnew said that, having suffered greatly, he felt the need to do something creative to recover his spirits, and was setting to work writing a novel because he was not yet strong enough to do serious mental work.

But I started out to recall what it was like to set oneself up to be a writer in the Midwest during the thirties. For I thought of myself as a midwesterner and not a Jew. I am often described as a Jewish writer; in much the same way one might be called a Samoan astronomer or an Eskimo cellist or a Zulu Gainsborough expert. There is some oddity about it. I am a Jew, and I have written some books. I have tried to fit my soul into the Jewish-writer category, but it does not feel comfortably accommodated there. I wonder, now and then, whether Philip Roth and Bernard Malamud and I have not become the Hart Schaffner and Marx of our trade. We have made it in the field of culture as Bernard Baruch made it on a park bench, as Polly Adler made it in prostitution, as Two Gun Cohen, the personal bodyguard of Sun Yat-Sen, made it in China. My joke is not broad enough to cover the contempt I feel for the opportunists, wise guys, and career types who impose such labels and trade upon them. In a century so disastrous to Jews, one hesitates to criticize those who believe that they are making the world safer

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by publicizing Jewish achievements. I myself doubt that this publicity is effective.

I did not go to the public library to read the Talmud but the novels and poems of Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, Edgar Lee Masters, and Vachel Lindsay. These were people who had resisted the material weight of American society and who proved—what was not immediately obvious—that the life lived in great manufacturing, shipping, and banking centers, with their slaughter stink, their great slums, prisons, hospitals, and schools, was also a human life. It appeared to me that this one thing, so intimately known that not only nerves, senses, mind, but also my very bones wanted to put it into words, might contain elements that not even Dreiser, whom I admired most, had yet reached. I felt that I was born to be a performing and interpretive creature, that I was meant to take part in a peculiar, exalted game. For there are good grounds to consider this, together with other forms of civilized behavior and ceremony, a game. At its noblest this game is played, under discipline, before God himself—so Plato said, and others as well. The game can be an offering, a celebration, an act of praise, an acknowledgment also of one's weaknesses and limitations. I couldn't have put it in this manner then. All that appeared then was a blind, obstinate impulse expressing itself in bursts of foolishness. I loved great things. I thought I had a right to think of that exalted game. I was also extremely proud, ornery, and stupid.

I was, in 1937, a very young, married man who had quickly lost his first job and who lived with his in-laws. His affectionate, loyal, and pretty wife insisted that he must be given a chance to write something. Having anyone pay attention to my writing wasn't a real possibility. I am as often bemused as amused at the attention my books have since received. Neglect would have been frightful, but attention has its disadvantages. The career of a critic, when I am feeling mean about it, I sometimes compare to that of a deaf man who tunes pianos. In a more benevolent mood I agree with my late father that people must be encouraged to make as honest a living as they can. For this reason I don't object to becoming a topic. When I visited Japan, I saw that there were prayer-and-fortune-telling papers sold for a penny at each temple. The buyers

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rolled up these long strips of paper and tied them by threads to bushes and low trees. From the twigs there dangled hundreds of tightly furled papers. I sometimes compare myself to one of these temple trees.

So I sat at a bridge table in a back bedroom of the apartment while all rational, serious, dutiful people were at their jobs or trying to find jobs, writing something. My table faced three cement steps that rose from the cellar into the brick gloom of a passageway. Only my mother-in-law was at home. A widow, then in her seventies, she wore a heavy white braid down her back. She had been a modern woman and a socialist and suffragette in the old country. She was attractive in a fragile, steely way. You felt Sophie's strength of will in all things. She kept a neat house. The very plants, the ashtrays, the pedestals, the doilies, the chairs, revealed her mastery. Each object had its military place. Her apartment could easily have been transferred to West Point.

Lunch occurred at half past twelve. The cooking was good. We ate together in the kitchen. The meal was followed by an interval of stone. My mother-in-law took a nap. I went into the street. Ravenswood was utterly empty. I walked about with something like a large stone in my belly. I often turned into Lawrence Avenue and stood on the bridge looking into the drainage canal. If I had been a dog I would have howled. Even a soft howl would have helped. But I was not here to howl. I was here to interpret the world (its American version) as brilliantly as possible. Still I would have been far happier selling newspapers at Union Station or practicing my shots in a poolroom. But I had a discipline to learn at the bridge table in the bedroom.

No wonder a writer of great talent and fine intelligence like John Cheever volunteers to help the convicts with their stories. He knows how it feels to be locked in. Maybe he thinks the prisoners, being already locked in, may as well learn the discipline. It is the most intolerable of privations for people whose social instincts are so highly developed that they want to write novels to be confined in rooms. Nuns fret not, perhaps, but writers do. Bernanos, the French religious novelist, said that his soul could not bear to be cut off from its kind, and that was why he did his work in cafés.

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Cafés indeed! I would have kissed the floor of a café. There were no cafés in Chicago. There were greasy-spoon cafeterias, one-arm joints, taverns. I never yet heard of a writer who brought his manuscripts into a tavern. I have always taken an interest in the fact that Schiller liked to smell apples when he was writing, that someone else kept his feet in a tub of water. The only person whose arrangements seemed to me worth imitating was the mystic and guru Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff, when he had work to do, set forth from headquarters in Fontainebleau with his disciples in several limousines. They carried hampers with caviar, cold fowl, champagne, cheese, and fruit. At a signal from the master the cars would stop. They would picnic in a meadow, and then, with all his followers around him, Gurdjieff did his writing. This, if it can be arranged, seems to me worth doing.

I am glad to say that I can't remember what I was writing in Ravenswood. It must have been terrible. The writing itself, however, was of no importance. The important thing was that American society and S. Bellow came face to face. I had to learn that by cutting myself off from American life in order to perform an alien task, I risked cutting myself off from everything that could nourish me. But this was the case only if you granted the monopoly of nutrients to this business-industrial, vital, brutal, proletarian, and middle-class city that was itself involved in a tremendous struggle. It was not even aggressively hostile, saying, "Lead my kind of life or die." Not at all. It simply had no interest in your sort of game.

Quite often, in the Hudson belonging to J.J., my brother-in-law, my mother-in-law and I drove to the cemetery. There we tended her husband's grave. Her trembling but somehow powerful, spotty hand pulled weeds. I made trips with a Mason jar to the faucet and made water splotches about the nasturtiums and sweet williams. Death, I thought, Chicago-style, might not be such a bad racket after all. At least you didn't have to drive down Harlem Avenue in rush hour back to the house with its West Point arrangements, with its pages of bad manuscript on the bridge table, and the silent dinner of soup and stew and strudel. After which you and your wife, washing dishes, enjoyed the first agreeable hours of the day.

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J.J., my brother-in-law, born Jascha in the old country, practiced law in the Loop. He was a Republican, member of the American Legion, a golfer, a bowler; he drove his conservative car conservatively, took the *Saturday Evening Post,* he wore a Herbert Hoover starched collar, trousers short in the ankle, and a hard straw hat in summer. He spoke in a pure Hoosier twang, not like a Booth Tarkington gentleman but like a real Tippecanoe country dirt farmer. All this Americanism was imposed on an exquisitely oriental face, dark, with curved nose and Turkish cheekbones. Naturally a warm-hearted man, he frowned upon me. He thought I was doing something foreign.

There was an observable parallel between us. As I was making a writer of myself, this exotic man was transforming his dark oriental traits and becoming an American from Indiana. He spoke of Aaron Slick from Punkin' Crick, of Elmer Dub: "Ah kin read writin', but ah can't read readin'." He had served in the Army—my wife wore his 1917 overcoat (too small for me), and J.J. told old, really old, La Salle Street Republican sex jokes about Woodrow Wilson and Edith Bolling. It was common in that generation and the next to tailor one's appearance and style to what were, after all, journalistic, publicity creations, and products of caricature. The queer hunger of immigrants and their immediate descendants for true Americanism has yet to be described. It may be made to sound like fun, but I find it hard to think of anyone who underwent the process with joy. Those incompetents who lacked mimetic talent and were pure buffoons were better off—I remember a cousin, Arkady, from the old country who declared that his new name was now, and henceforth, Lake Erie. A most poetic name, he thought. In my own generation there were those immigrants who copied even the unhappiness of the Protestant majority, embracing its miseries, battling against Mom; reluctant, after work, to board the suburban train, drinking downtown, drinking on the club car, being handed down drunk to the wife and her waiting station-wagon like good Americans. These people martyred themselves in the enactment of roles that proved them genuine—just as madly wretched in marriage as Abe Lincoln and Mary Todd. Cousin Arkady, a clown who sold dehydrated applesauce on the road, giving dry applesauce

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demonstrations to housewives in small-town department stores, was spared the worst of it. He simply became "Archie," and made no further effort to prove himself a real American.

The point of this brief account, as I see it, is to evoke that mixture of imagination and stupidity with which people met the American Experience, that murky, heavy, burdensome, chaotic thing. I see that my own error, shared with many others, was to seek sanctuary in what corners of culture one could find in this country, there to enjoy my high thoughts and to perfect myself in the symbolic discipline of an art. I can't help feeling that I overdid it. One didn't need as much sanctuary as all that.

If I had to name the one force in America that opposes the symbolic discipline of poetry today as much as brutal philistinisms did before World War II, I would say the Great Noise. The enemy is noise. By noise I mean not simply the noise of technology, the noise of money or advertising and promotion, the noise of the media, the noise of miseducation, but the terrible excitement and distraction generated by the crises of modern life. Mind, I don't say that philistinism is gone. It is not. It has found many disguises, some highly artistic and peculiarly insidious. But the noise of life is the great threat. Contributing to it are real and unreal issues, ideologies, rationalizations, errors, delusions, nonsituations that look real, nonquestions demanding consideration, opinions, analyses in the press, on the air, expertise, inside dope, factional disagreement, official rhetoric, information—in short, the sounds of the public sphere, the din of politics, the turbulence and agitation that set in about 1914 and have now reached an intolerable volume. Nadezhda Mandelstam, writing of poets in the Soviet Union, says of the Russian noise: "Nowhere else I believe were people so much deafened as they were here by the din of life—One after another poets fell silent because they could no longer hear their own voices." She adds: "The noise drowned out thought and, in the case of millions, conscience as well."

William Wordsworth, nearly two hundred years ago, expressed his concern over the effects of modern turbulence on poetry. He was right, too. But in the language of my youth—"He didn't know the half of it."

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American Eves in American Edens

JUDITH FRYER

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, a Mr. H. N. Leet reported in the Oneida, New York, *Circular* about a new community at Mountain Cove, Virginia:

> Yesterday . . . I heard extracts of letters from Mr. Hitchcock written from Virginia; in which he states that they have found the garden of Eden, the identical spot where our first parents sinned, and on which no human foot has trod since Adam and Eve were driven out. . . . This is the spot that is to form the center of the redemption now at hand; and parts adjacent are, by convulsions and a reverse process, to be restored to their primeval state. . . . The revelation was said to have been spelled out by raps from Paul.

This identification of America as New World Garden of Eden is neither casual nor unusual. As Emerson wrote to Carlyle in 1840, "We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat pocket." John Humphrey Noyes, for example, founder of the Oneida Perfectionists, wrote in his *History of American Socialisms,* "In vital society strength will be increased and the necessity of labor diminished, till work will become sport, as it would have been in the original Eden state." These communitarians were engaged in nothing less than living myth; theirs was the attempt to take the raw material of literature and of dreams and turn it into the basis for real life.

The time span of this utopian search for the New World Garden is from the 1840s through the 1880s. Interestingly enough, this is the same period during which another segment of the population was finding the dominant style of living of pre- and post-Civil War

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America, with its growing industrialization and urbanization, less than Edenic and was searching for workable alternatives. Despite wishful thinking—to be found in marriage manuals, gift books, ladies' magazines, medical reports, and sermons—a sexual revolution was taking place through these decades. Compare the observations of Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic treatise, *Democracy in America* (1835), with those of James Bryce in *The American Commonwealth* (1888) half a century later. Tocqueville wrote, "In America, more than anywhere else in the world, care has been taken constantly to trace clearly distinct spheres of action for the two sexes, and both are required to keep in step, but along paths that are never the same." Women took no part in business or politics according to Tocqueville; they never managed "the external relations of the family," but were confined to "the quiet sphere of domestic duties." The duties of men were carefully separated from those of women "so that the great work of society may be better performed." Fifty-three years later Bryce could report (perhaps idealistically) that American women had gained access to virtually all the professions. "It is easier for women to find a career, to obtain remunerative work of an intellectual as of a commercial or mechanical kind, than in any part of Europe," he wrote, perceiving the result as "a new kind of womanhood" whose effect on American society at large was profound. Between the time of Tocqueville and the time of Bryce, the "new woman" had begun to permeate all levels of American culture. This period, during which the traditional relationships between the sexes were being questioned and experimentally disrupted, coincided almost exactly with the rise of utopian communities in America.

In experimenting with alternative modes of living, communitarians attempted to create a new role for the American woman. They released her from her "sphere" of doll, wife, and mother by condemning sexual pleasure as "impure," or by abolishing monogamous marriage, or by doing away with private property. In the case of the Shakers, the most notable example of celibate living, the concept of a bisexual God made the equality of the sexes logical and reinforced the belief that any attempt of one sex to dominate the other could only prove disastrous. The revivalist movement

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flourished chiefly in western New York and often spawned free-love communities. Whitney Cross asserts in *The Burned-Over District* that reformers Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Susan B. Anthony, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the Grimké sisters, and others soon to lead the woman's rights movement served their apprenticeships as crusaders for temperance, abolition, and moral reform. All these movements were led largely by women because women had always played an important role in matters of morality and religion. On the other hand, social scientists like R. Palme Dutt argue that the struggle for the emancipation of women and the struggle for socialism are inextricably connected. The conditions of a private property society, he maintains, "of the individual household, of economic dependence, of the exploitation of the weakest, of the conflict between the social needs of motherhood and of the care of children and the individualist laws of property and the antisocial conditions of the wage system all underlie the oppression and servitude of women, and can only be overcome through social organization—through, in other words, a communist form of society."

These are the two strands of nineteenth-century utopian experiments: the religious strand, which concentrated on the regeneration of the soul and included both the heretical religious groups and the revivalists, and the secular strand, which, among other things, promoted the spread of European socialism in this country.

Most of the communitarians were concerned with sex and sexual roles. Those religious groups that enforced celibacy were often preoccupied with sexuality by default. In theory a woman fared better in celibate communities than in the profane world because she could no longer be considered a sexual object; instead of being confined to the sphere of home and children, she could hold positions of leadership and responsibility equal to those of men. Yet there was something childlike about her dependence upon a charismatic leader like Mother Ann, and something self-defeating about the denial of her own sexuality. Mormonism, on the other hand, which gave free rein to the polygamous sexual desires of men, could hardly be said to improve the status of women. John Humphrey Noyes, also a charismatic leader, combined Mother

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Ann's rhetoric about sexual purity with the Mormon practice of polygamy. On a spiritual level at least, he was deeply concerned with treating women as human beings—devising, for example, the system of "male continence" to free women from the pain and subsequent burdens of childbirth. Secular communitarians such as those of New Harmony, Indiana, and Brook Farm understood intellectually the logic of social reform and of abolition.

The leaders of all the utopian communities, religious and secular, were men, with the exception of Mother Ann Lee, founder of the Shakers, and Jemima Wilkinson, leader of the Jemimakins. In every case, however, the leaders made conscious attempts to create new sexual roles for their followers, much as novelists create roles for their characters; and in nearly every case the communities disbanded when the leaders died or left the community. Interestingly, Emerson had predicted their demise as early as 1842. "The Reforms have their high origin in an ideal justice," he wrote, "but they do not retain the purity of an idea. They are quickly organized in some low, inadequate form, and present no more poetic image to the mind, than the evil tradition which they reprobated. This then is our criticism on the reforming movement; that it is in its origin divine; in its management and details timid and profane."

The three foremost religious communities in nineteenth-century America were the Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Perfectionists.

Ann Lee, founder of the American Shakers, came to America with eight disciples in 1774, after she had received a revelation directing her to establish the millennial church in the New World. She met with immediate success: whole congregations of Baptists joined the Shakers. The first American Shaker settlement was established at Watervliet, New York, and within five years several thousand persons had been converted—all of whom acknowledged Ann Lee as the female messiah, the "Mother in Christ," and called her "Mother Ann." Originally known as the "Shaking Quakers," because of their rhythmic bodily manifestations of religious fervor, the group took the name of "The Millennial Church, or United Society of Believers, commonly called Shakers." The first formally

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organized Shaker community was established in New Lebanon, New York, in 1787, three years after the death of Ann Lee.

She had come from proletarian English stock: her father was a blacksmith; she went to work in a cotton factory at an early age and never learned to read or write. She had, says V. F. Calverton, a Joan of Arc complex, starting with childhood visions in which she saw herself as a divine spirit, an angel in human guise. Believing she was not her mother's child but God's, "conjured from the loins of the firmament," she would stare into the mirror to detect her transformation into a supernatural being and watch her shoulders for signs of wings. Her unhappy marriage to Abraham Stanley, a blacksmith like her father, and the death of her four children probably had a great deal to do with her religious fervor and her exaltation of celibacy. Ann Lee came to view procreation with horror, and encouraged spiritual impulses over physical. In the eyes of one of her followers, she became "as free from carnal desires as a new born infant." She taught that lust in Eden was the original sin and that no soul could follow Christ while receiving "gratifications of lust." "Whoever yields enough to the evil tempter to gratify in the least the sensual passions—either in deed, word, or thought," the Shaker creed reads, "shall confess honestly the same to his elders ere the sun of another day shall set to announce a day of condemnation and wrath against the guilty soul. These vile passions are—fleshly lusts in every form, idolatry, selfishness, envy, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, and their kindred evils."

The Shakers believed, according to their creed:

I. That God is a dual person, male and female; that Adam was a dual person, being created in God's image; and that the distinction of sex is eternal, inheres in the soul itself; and that no angels or spirits exist who are not male and female.

II. That Christ is a Spirit, and one of the highest who appeared first in the person of Jesus, representing the male, and later in the person of Ann Lee, representing the female element in God.

Shaker brethren and sisters lived in separate dormitory-type rooms, ate separately, worked in different areas, and even wor-

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shipped separately. They were not allowed to pass one another on the stairs, or to converse with one another save in the presence of a third person older than ten years of age. They never touched one another, not even to shake hands. Women cleaned the men's rooms after the men had left them—though men emptied their own chamber pots, these being suggestive of sex. Each brother was assigned a sister to care for his clothing, tell him when he needed a new garment, and reprove him for disorderly behavior. In general, women did the cooking, washing, and ironing and, except for such light work as picking berries, did not work in the fields or shops.

The behavior and dress of the Shaker woman were rigidly prescribed. Her gown was pleated and her cap, according to one visitor, "so completely hides the hair, and so encroaches upon the face, that a stranger is at first unable to distinguish the old from the young." She was commanded to "go on the toes, left arm folded across the stomack, right hand at the side, tips of fingers touching the thumb."

Occasionally the women would visit the men. The two sexes would sit in rows opposite one another, each with a clean white handkerchief spread on his or her lap, to indulge in an hour of small talk and singing. One man recorded that the visits were dull because "There was nothing to talk about, particularly since the women had little understanding of the affairs of men."

Yet in the Shakers' communes power was vested equally in men and women, and their insistence on absolute equality between the sexes was revolutionary. Elder Frederick Evans, who had been a radical journalist before joining the Shakers, wrote:

> To the mind of the simple, unsophisticated Shaker it seems marvellously inconsistent . . . that more than one half the citizens should be disfranchised because they happen to be females, and compelled by the sword to obey laws they never sanctioned, and ofttimes in which they have no faith, and to submit to taxation where there has been no previous representation. . . . And when this . . . unjust and unequal administration is confirmed and carried out in the most popular religious organisations of Christendom, the Shakers think the climax of absurdity, tyranny, and oppression well-nigh attained.

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Thus, the "visible head of the Church of Christ on earth" was vested in a ministry of equal numbers of men and women (generally two of each), and likewise each "family" (usually of thirty to ninety persons) had two elders, male and female, "to teach, exhort, and lead the family in spiritual concerns," as well as deacons and deaconesses "who provide for the support and convenience of the family." At the top of the spiritual pyramid, of course, was Mother Ann Lee. She was succeeded after her death by James Whittaker, Joseph Meacham, and then by another woman, Lucy Wright.

With their polygamous marriages, the Mormons were at the other end of the sexual spectrum from the celibate Shakers. Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1830, declared that "Monogamy exalted one woman and left others—sweethearts, mistresses, prostitutes, spinsters, unexalted; polygamy exalted all women equally. Polygamy made it possible for all women to be married and bear children. It also enriched and irradiated the family institution and gave new possibilities to personality development among children." He did his best to fulfill this prophecy: before he was murdered he had about twenty-five wives (accounts vary) from the ages of sixteen to fifty. His successor, Brigham Young, had twenty-seven wives, fifty-six children, and countless grandchildren.

Amazingly, many Mormon women (or at least those whose written testimony we have) did not seem to feel degraded, dominated, or subjugated by the Mormon doctrine of male supremacy, but saw in polygamy the potential elevation of their sex. "The principle of plural marriage is true," one such woman stated, "and if properly lived, would redeem woman from slavery and put her on a higher plane than she has ever occupied before. There would be no prostitution in the world, and every normal woman would have a husband and children." Another Mormon wife avowed that "a Congress composed of polygamic men who are true to their wives would confer a far higher honor upon a nation, and would perform better service to this country than a Congress composed of monogamic, unreliable husbands." (The point seems to be the overt, as opposed to the covert, unreliability of men rather than the

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liberation of women.) Susa Young Gates, one of Brigham Young's daughters, went so far as to glorify the Mormon point of view as the key to the "woman question"—in language not unlike that of the antifeminists in the profane world:

> The Mormon women are working grandly at the sex problem of the nineteenth century. They are beginning to move out on independent lines of business, of art, and of the professions. Their marital relations make this an easy matter. The woman will always be the head and genius of the home, but whether it is a corollary that she shall forever wash dishes and scrub floors has become a grave question. The rapid progress of the age finds ready disciples in Mormon wives, who feel the natural craving for home life and children satisfied, yet withal have ample time for the development and cultivation of every faculty within them. . . . Content in knowing herself beloved, and wedded to a man whose purity of body and mind is equal to her own, while his intelligence is one degree higher, his wisdom a rock upon which to lean in every emergency, the plural wife may, from her own threshold, look out into the broad world and choose such enterprise as she feels herself adapted to, the twenty years of her middle life spent in the care and rearing of her children the while she is quietly studying and preparing herself for that further mission.

Yet all was not completely easy in the polygamous world. At least one product of a Mormon household, Louis Larsen, remembers men as having a good time at the expense of women, and observes that "most of the plural courtships and honeymoonings were covert affairs, mercifully concealed from the eyes of the first woman." Although upon occasion plural wives and families were domiciled in the same household, generally a new wife was a kind of mystery woman, often residing with her parents or in a nearby town. Plural marriage was primarily "a godsend to the spinster. She could always go out and get herself a man." Although it was one's spiritual duty to marry, coercion of the fairer sex was rare; sporadic cases of marriage by duress, however, are among Larsen's "colorful memories."

V. F. Calverton suggests that the Mormons were attacked so unrelentingly and so unjustly because a plurality of wives was what

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the frontiersman unconsciously desired but consciously opposed. He sees violent hostility to the Mormon pratice as only natural for men who were supposed to confine their sexual drives within monogamic mores. But Calverton believes that women, like men, are polygamous by nature, and monogamous only by custom. The best proof of this, he writes, is to be found "in those primitive communities where the conditions of life do not hamper the sex expression of women any more than of men. . . . Granted equal freedom she tends to be equally variational and multiple in her sex expression."

Oneida makes a good test case for the "variational and multiple" sexuality of women. John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida Community, stated his philosophy of sexual communism in a letter to his disciple David Harrison:

> When the will of God is done on earth, as it is in heaven, there will be no marriage. The marriage supper of the Lamb is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarreling, have no place there, for the same reason as that which forbids the guests at a Thanksgiving dinner to claim each his separate dish, and quarrel with the rest for his rights. In a holy community there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be—and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the other. . . . The guests of the marriage supper may have each his favorite dish, each a dish of his own procuring, and that without the jealousy of exclusiveness. I call a certain woman my wife—she is yours, she is Christ's, and in him she is the bride of all saints. She is dear in the hand of a stranger, and according to my promise to her I rejoice. My claim upon her cuts directly across the marriage covenant of this world, and God knows the end.

This is interesting language. Despite his stated aims—full sexual equality—what Noyes is actually arguing for here, much like Joseph Smith, is the dominance of woman not by one man but by many. A woman is a "dish" to be consumed at a "feast." Notice the words "my claim"—prophetic of the sexual relations at Oneida, where Father Noyes was to beget more than his share of what he called "stirpicults."

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The radical doctrine of this "Battle Axe" letter—so-called because it was published in Harrison's paper, *The Battle Axe and Weapon's of War*—became the core of the Perfectionists' way of life, first in Putney, Vermont, where in the early 1840s Noyes established his first community, and later at Oneida, New York, where they moved in 1847. There every member stood in relation to every other member as a partner in what Noyes called "complex marriage." So strongly was this community of love insisted upon that two people who seemed to be exclusively devoted to one another were chastised by group "mutual criticism" and urged to abandon their selfishness. Noyes tells of one young couple who were deeply in love and wanted to have a child, but were rebuked for their selfishness. Each was encouraged to have a child with another partner, which they did. The young man, far from showing resentment, frequently cared for his wife's child so that her courtship with another man could go on uninterrupted. Thus the Perfectionists abolished sexual inequality by getting rid of the notion of woman as property—both as the property of a single man and as the conduit for private property—but the price of their sexual and economic communism was often the denial of intimacy.

For Noyes, the variety and multiplicity of sexual expression possible for the Perfectionists outweighed the advantages of personal intimacy—perhaps because of all those young girls with whom he, as senior member of the community, shared both amative and propagative love. Or perhaps it was the spirit of the times; for in language similar to Whitman's, Noyes elevated love in complex marriage not only to a commandment—"The new commandment is that we love one another, and that not by pairs, as in the world, but *en masse*"—but to the highest of the art forms. "Indeed," he wrote in *Male Continence*, "it will rank above music, painting and sculpture, et cetera, for it combines the charms and benefits of them all. The practice which we propose will give new speed to the advance of civilization and refinement." In order to keep the two kinds of love (amative and propagative) distinct, males at Oneida practiced *coitus interruptus*, or what Noyes called "male continence." This rather primitive system of birth control worked because young girls were initiated into complex marriage by mature

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men who, aware of the beauty and responsibility of amative intercourse, had learned to elevate their natural impulses to a "moral" plane, and young boys were initiated by women past menopause.

Sexually free from pregnancy, then, and economically free from dependence upon the male, woman would be able to participate in the sexual act as an equal partner. For the first time, Noyes hoped, she could enjoy sex rather than regard it as a compulsory and unwelcome duty. In "complex marriage," women were as free to make sexual advances as men and also as free to decline "social approaches." "When two members aspired to closer relations, intimation to that effect was given through the medium of an older woman who represented the Community," writes Constance Noyes Robertson, Noyes's granddaughter, in her excellent book on Oneida. "This was for the double purpose of overseeing and advising the young people and of allowing the woman so approached to be perfectly free to decline without embarrassment."

While Noyes believed that "amativeness keeps the capital stock of life circulating" and "the propagative act is a drain on the life of a man," he realized children were necessary to the perpetuity of the community. Accordingly, he introduced not only the first planned parenthood system but a selective breeding program which he called "stirpiculture." Fifty-eight children were born under this system after its inauguration in 1848. The mothers were chosen from the ranks of the young women who signed the following pledge, cited by Robertson:

1. That we do not belong to ourselves in any respect, but that we belong first to God, and second to Mr. Noyes as God's true representative.

2. That we have no rights or personal feelings in regard to childbearing which shall in the least degree oppose or embarrass him in his choice of scientific combinations.

3. That we will put aside all envy, childishness, and self-seeking and rejoice with those who are chosen candidates; that we will, if necessary, become martyrs to science, and cheerfully renounce all desire to become mothers, if for any reason Mr. Noyes deem us unfit material for propagation. Above all, we offer ourselves "living sacrifices" to God and true Communism.

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Each woman who was chosen by Noyes as a partner in this experiment—though none of them were among the fifty-three who signed this pledge—felt honored at the privilege of having the patriarch, then a man in his sixties, as the father of her child. But even where Noyes was not directly involved in "propagative intercourse," as can be seen from the language of the pledge, he was involved in every case in a supervisory capacity. In fact, such phrases as "martyrs," "living sacrifices," and "Mr. Noyes, God's true representative" make one wonder whether Noyes was really as interested in the welfare of women as in the personal ego gratification (not to mention physical satisfaction) that he got from "complex marriage." According to Robertson, however, the people at Oneida were happy. "They had an unshakable faith in their creed and their leader," she writes. "Happiness, I believe, is the real theme of this book; the autobiography of a happy people." At any rate, the community's attempt to produce superior offspring was quite successful, despite the scant knowledge on which the system was based. As Mulford Q. Sibley points out, however, given the superior stock of the Oneidans themselves, it would have been surprising if they had not produced superior children.

Children belonged to the community at large, and they were raised in community nurseries and classrooms, thus freeing the women from the confinements of motherhood and child care. "Our community principles in regard to 'Woman's Sphere' have governed in this movement," states the Oneida *Circular*. "We do not believe that motherhood is the chief end of woman's life; that she was made for the children she can bear. She was made for God and herself"—and, of course, Mr. Noyes. "In association with man she was not made first of all to be the mother of his children, but to be his companion and lover." "Women are capable of development in a thousand ways apart from maternity," states another issue. "If they are to be educated and act in the mental sphere, they cannot devote their life wholly to childbearing." Little girls even burned their dolls so they would not learn to be mothers before they were educated as persons.

Noyes was not only interested in freeing woman in the erotic and economic spheres, but he wanted to adopt all possible measures

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that would implement her equality. For example, he insisted that preparing three hot meals a day cost too much in woman-labor. A sign in the pantry read: "Believing that the practice of serving up in a formal manner three meals of heated food daily is a requirement of custom and not of nature . . . unnecessary and injurious to health and comfort . . . subjecting females almost universally to the worst of slavery . . . we hereby notify our friends that we shall omit . . . two of the usual meals . . . and instead of them shall keep in this pantry a supply and variety of eatables, which we invite them to partake of at such times and in such manner as appetite or fancy may suggest." For similar reasons, Noyes advocated a style of dress for women that would be simple, comfortable, and natural, writing in the first *Annual Report*: "Woman's dress is a standing lie. It proclaims that she is not a two-legged animal, but something like a churn, standing on castors! When the distinction of the sexes is reduced to the bounds of nature and decency, a dress will be adopted that will be at the same time the most simple and the most beautiful; and it will be the same, or nearly the same, for both sexes." Noyes saw the ideal costume as that of children: The "frock and pantalets . . . is well adapted to the free motion of both sexes. This, or something like it, will be the uniform of vital society." Similarly, women were advised to cut their hair and wear it "in the simple mode of little girls, down in the neck." This style of dress and hair, an interesting acting-out of the myth of innocence among Perfectionists, Noyes saw as a way of making the sexes not only look more alike, but also look younger, fresher, and more dynamic. Thus, for all his concern with sex, he at least verbally exalted the spiritual over the physical in both men and women. "We do not believe in the equality of men," he wrote in the *Handbook of the Oneida Community*, "but we do believe that every man, woman and child should be surrounded by circumstances favoring the best development of heart, mind and body, and that no one should be excluded on account of age, sex or color from any occupation for which he or she is adapted by nature or culture." In traditional society, Noyes pointed out, the division of labor whereby "the woman keeps the house and the man labors abroad" separates the sexes entirely. Instead, in "vital society," men and

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women would mingle at their labors. "It will be economically as well as spiritually profitable," Noyes wrote—not mentioning, but making obvious, the attendant physical pleasure "to marry them in-doors and out, by day as well as by night. When the partition between the sexes is taken away, and man ceases to make woman a propagative drudge, when love takes the place of shame, and fashion follows nature in dress and business, men and women will be able to mingle in all their employments as boys and girls mingle in their sports; and then labor will be attractive." We have the reports both of a firsthand observer and of the Oneida *Circular* that in practice both men and women worked in the laundry, the kitchen, the silk factory, at bookkeeping, hardware, carpentry, and education, and served on the committees that governed the community. As for sports, the *Circular* of March 6, 1866, reports that women are being taught to swim—"a field which has belonged to men alone." And as for their education, "They shall be admitted to all the sciences, to the whole course of education considered useful to men. We maintain . . . that if women are thoroughly educated, the education of men will take care of itself."

The Oneida Community, then, was both the most radical nineteenth-century experiment in women's liberation and the most blatant example of hero worship at the expense not only of women but of that individualism which Americans hold dear. In his insistence on mutual communism in economics and in sex, Noyes had more in common with such twentieth-century writers as Alice Rossi and Carolyn Heilbrun who propose androgynous paradigms than with his contemporaries who advocated the separate advancement of women. But in his attempts to achieve spiritual perfection through sexual purity, based on a personality cult that centered on himself as romantic hero, he was very much a man of his time. Seeing Noyes as an Adamic hero, we can look back on his words about the women's movement with amusement. "We can read John Stuart Mill with pleasure; Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony and *The Women's Journal* with attention," he wrote in the *Circular* of March 18, 1872, "but when it comes to doing anything for ourselves, we have to refuse to look at men and women as mutually independent and in a state of competition." And in a later edition

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he declares, "Certain it is that some way we have obtained our dearest rights and so have no occasion to get up meetings to talk about them" because "the Community took the high ground on the subject of Women's Rights years and years ago."

Many, though not all, of the nonreligious socialist communes believed with Noyes that a community of love demanded sexual equality and sexual freedom for both men and women. Like the Mormons and the Perfectionists, these secular communitarians were vigorously excoriated by the upholders of puritanical mores as advocates of "free love." But both the celibate and the "free love" communities released women from their confinement to the home—either because sex was considered sinful or because private property, hence private monogamous relationships, was not concomitant with the general good. Both views, according to Donald Drew Egbert and Stowe Persons in *Socialism in American Life,* were abhorrent to Victorian America, which, "exalting home and family, found the 'unnatural' restraints of the Shakers as objectionable as the 'licentious' sex mores of the Perfectionists."

Most American secular communities were living implementations of the philosophies of Robert Owen or Charles Fourier. (The exceptions were the anarchistic groups, which reacted against Owenism, and the Icarians, a special offshoot of Owenism.) With no tyrannical God to appease for the Fall of man, they dared to seek a new happiness by abolishing the Christian code of the dual nature of man: he was not, they believed, by nature sinful, but perfectible. In this, and in proclaiming the emancipation of women, they were revolutionary; but it was when they experimented with free love that they were considered outrageous, often bringing down the wrath of church and state alike. Both Owen and Fourier were subversive in their views of marriage and family; both proposed the economic independence and equality of every member of the community. Although Owen based his communism on the home and Fourier his joint-stock system on business principles, the main idea of both was the enlargement of the home, the extension of the family from the little man-wife circle to the larger corporation.

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Robert Owen, founder of the community at New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825, came to the New World from England with utopian plans for abolishing the "terrible trinity of man's oppressors: private property, irrational religion, marriage." A radical on the "woman question," he declared that not only was woman man's equal, but "there was not a social, a property or a political right which he enjoyed to which she was not justly and equally entitled." His son, Robert Dale Owen, was the champion of women's rights who persuaded the Indiana legislature to pass laws to assure women's rights: the right to own and control their separate property during marriage, the right of married women to their earnings, widows' right to absolute ownership of one-third of their deceased husband's property, and the right to divorce cruel or habitually drunk husbands. In 1851 he was presented with a silver pitcher inscribed: "Presented to the Honorable Robert Dale Owen by the women of Indiana, and in acknowledgement of his true and noble advocacy of their independent rights to property in the Constitutional Convention of Indiana."

Robert Owen's other major area of reform so far as women were concerned was marriage. He would substitute what he called "natural marriage" for conventional marriage, which he saw as a form of slavery. A natural marriage was "a union formed under which they are enabled to acquire an accurate knowledge of themselves and of human nature; wherein no other motive shall influence the affections but intimate sympathy and unaffected congeniality, founded on a real knowledge of each other by both parties." He objected to the existing marriage ceremony, which gave one half of the population domination over the other half. When he married Mary Jane Robinson, their radical marriage contract was published in the community's *Disseminator*:

This day, April 12, 1832, I enter into a matrimonial engagement with Mary Jane Robinson, a young woman whose opinions in all important subjects and whose mode of thinking and feeling, coincide more intimately with my own than do those of any other individual with whom I am acquainted. . . . Of the unjust rights which in virtue of this ceremony an iniquitous law tacitly gives me over the person and property of another, I cannot legally, but I can morally, divest my-

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self. And I hereby earnestly desire to be considered by others as utterly divested, now and during the rest of my life, of any such rights—the barbarous relics of a feudal and despotic system soon destined in the course of improvement to be wholly swept away and the existence of which is a tacit insult to the good sense and good feeling of the present comparatively civilized age.

Since women were economic, political, and social equals of men at New Harmony, they were given, the New Harmony *Gazette* states, "as good an education as our males, to qualify them for every situation in life in which they may be placed." The first public school system in the United States which offered the same educational opportunities to girls as to boys was established at New Harmony in 1826. Owen was influenced here by Madame Fretagot, a disciple of Pestalozzi, the famous educational revolutionary; she strove to make her girls as efficient and capable as men.

Another more important influence, however, was Owen's association with Frances Wright, whom John Humphrey Noyes called "the spiritual help-mate and better half of the Owens, . . . the leading woman in the communistic movement of that period, . . . indeed the pioneer of the 'strong-minded women'." Together she and Robert Dale Owen edited the New Harmony *Gazette* and later the *Free Enquirer*. While at New Harmony she gathered about her a coterie of kindred spirits and founded an organization of women for study and discussion, the Woman's Social Society, in 1826. This was the forerunner of women's clubs in America, a direct antecedent of the Minerva Society—founded by Constance Fauntleroy Runcie, a granddaughter of Robert Owen, in 1859—which preceded by nine years the more famous Boston's Women's Club and the Sorosis of New York. Frances Wright is especially remembered for her founding of the Nashoba community, an "emancipation plantation" where slaves could be educated for freedom—one of the few utopian colonies in the South.

Frances Wright and her sister Camilla were born in Scotland, orphaned at an early age, and brought up by freethinking relatives. Frances was thoroughly versed in the literature of her day, well-informed on general topics, fluent in French and Italian, and

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widely traveled. According to Robert Dale Owen, she was an intimate friend of General Lafayette, with whom she first came to this country, and of the leading European reformers. Owen remembers her as "a thorough republican" and "an advocate of universal suffrage without regard to color or sex, . . . a radical alike in politics, morals, and religion." Ernestine L. Rose, addressing the Tenth National Women's Rights Convention, praised her as the first woman in America to speak out for the equality of the sexes, and dwelt on the difficulty of the innovator's task in the face of slander and persecution. Likewise, Paulina Davis, speaking on the twentieth anniversary of the National Woman's Suffrage Association, compared Frances Wright to Socrates, in that "looking down from the serene heights of her philosophy, she pitied and endured the scoffs and jeers of the multitude, and fearlessly continued to utter her rebukes against oppression, ignorance, and bigotry."

Mrs. Anthony Trollope, on the other hand, was among those who were shocked by Wright. In her *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, she wrote: "That a lady of fortune, family, and education, whose youth had been passed in the most refined circles of private life, should present herself to the people as a public lecturer, would naturally excite surprise anywhere, . . . but in America, where women are guarded by a seven-fold shield of habitual insignificance, it has caused an effect which can scarcely be described. 'Miss Wright, of Nashoba, is going to lecture . . .' sounded from street to street, from house to house."

Frances Wright was aware that even the women for whom she was trying to secure property rights, free universal education, divorce reforms, and birth control were hostile. She wrote her sister from "a cabin crowded with ladies who perhaps feel in my company as in the presence of a new importation from the South Seas, and I most certainly in theirs as some unfortunate antipodean to whom the surrounding minds and manners are as uncongenial as the bonnets."

The most vigorous attacks on her were in the press. The New York *American* declared that Frances Wright had ceased to be a woman and that it would take the liberty of referring to her as "a female monster." The *Evening Post* advocated that any hall rented

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to her be burned down. Linking her to the other Eves in utopia, "A Doleful Ditty" eulogized "the departure of that 'mother of the Gracchi,' Frances Wright, the 'petticoated politician' from Free America, after a brilliant career of regeneration." One of its many verses went:

> She beat Jemima Wilkinson
> Joana Southcote quite,
> E'n Mother Lee was nothing to
> Our little Fanny Wright.
> For she had gold within her purse
> And brass upon her face;
> And talent indescribable
> To give all thoughts new grace.
> And if you want to raise the wind,
> Or breed a moral storm
> You must have one bold lady-man
> To prate about reform.

Although New Harmony had its Fanny Wright, in no other communal enterprise was the "new woman"—the embodiment of Eve who will not have her sphere prescribed by puritanical male society—so much in evidence as at Brook Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. It was the community of the intellectuals, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson (although he did not join), Hawthorne (whose *Blithedale Romance* is the most famous account of Brook Farm), the Channings, Richard Henry Dana, Orestes Brownson, Theodore Parker, Bronson Alcott, John Sullivan Dwight and his sister Marianne, Isaac Hecker, Margaret Fuller, and Elizabeth Peabody. Conceived and founded by George Ripley and his wife Sophia, it was a cooperative community in which "equality before God of all of us" was the central principle and "plain living and high thinking" the central theme. It would be a place, Ripley explained to Emerson and Margaret Fuller, where "we could gather and show the world how to live." Emerson enthusiastically endorsed it as "a substitute for our failing churches. . . . Your community will be open all the time . . . where the tired wayfarer can come in and be soothed by the thought of a better world when he is weary of this one." These were the men and women who

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took an active part in the reform movements of the day, particularly the abolition of slavery. They embraced the idea of sexual equality with the same logic and zeal with which they spoke and wrote for racial equality. "It is not surprising," wrote Margaret Fuller—whom Amelia Russell, a Brook Farm resident, described as "the most wonderful woman of the age"—"that it should be the anti-slavery party that pleads for woman," considering that her economic dependence on man makes her "a child, or ward only, not an equal partner."

Marianne Dwight was interested in nothing less than "the elevation of woman to independence, and an acknowledged equality with man." She proposed that women go into business for themselves, and that all the proceeds be applied to the elevation of woman. "Take a spiritual view of the matter," she wrote to a friend. "Raise woman to the equal of man, and what intellectual developments may we not expect? How the whole aspect of society will be changed! And this is the great work, is it not, that [the] Association in its present early stage has to do?"

The *Harbinger,* the official Brook Farm publication, the *Phalanx,* and the *Dial* frequently printed contributions from and about women. Notable among its contributors was Elizabeth Peabody, a leading radical of her day, who published Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" and who is supposedly Miss Birdseye in Henry James's *The Bostonians.* She advocated "a general ease of circumstances" in order to leave the passions "free to find their legitimate exercise" and thus "dignify woman universally." Her questioning of conventional marriage was similar to that of many of the secular communitarians, such as Charles Lane, who asserted in the *Dial* that "if the individual or separate family is in the true order of Providence, then the associative life is a false effort. If the associative life is true, then is the separate family a false arrangement."

Clearly—at least for Elizabeth Peabody—it was the "true order of Providence" that enabled the members of the community at West Roxbury to be "wholly true to their natures as men and women." Women especially, confined to a proper "sphere," could not be true to their natures in separate families. We hear everywhere, another *Dial* contributor complained, even from the pulpit,

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"what lovely things they (the 'feebler sex') may become, if they will only be good, quiet, and gentle, attend exclusively to their domestic duties, and the cultivation of religious feelings, which the other sex very kindly relinquish to them as their inheritance." The writer attacks this poetic vision of a spiritualized creature whom "no true woman could or would become" and applies the Brook Farm concept of individual uniqueness to the female sex:

> All adjusting of the whole sex to a sphere is vain, for no two persons naturally have the same. Character, intellect creates the sphere of each. What is individual and peculiar to each determines it. . . . In our present state of society woman possesses not; she is under possession. . . . Woman is educated with the tacit understanding that she is only half a being, and an appendage. . . . Her life is usually bustle and hurry, or barren order, dreary decorum and method, without vitality. . . . She looks out into life, finds nothing there but confusion, and congratulates herself that it is man's business, not hers, to look through it all. . . . Is this woman's destiny?

Accounts of how much freedom women had in community life at Brook Farm vary. In his firsthand account of the community, John Codman states that women had a great deal more freedom there than they had known in the outside world. They worked cheerfully, he says, because work was never overburdening and was a matter of choice. Emerson commented good-naturedly: "The ladies took cold on washing days and it was ordained that the gentlemen-shepherds should hang-out the clothes, which they punctually did." Women were relieved of the burden of child care by one of the first day-care systems in the country. They dressed as they chose, many of them adopting the costume of Amelia Bloomer. Politically, the right of women to vote was accepted as a matter of course: "At all of the meetings for the acceptance or rejection of applicants and other purposes, women cast their votes without criticism, for were they not mutually interested?" Amelia Russell recalls that all domestic duties were generally performed by the younger females and were often monotonous, but that "a more willing set of workers could hardly be found." Ora Gannett Sedgwick, echoing Emerson, remembers "young men helping with tea

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dishes and two gentlemen who muffle[d] themselves up in the stormy and freezing weather, and work[ed] hard in the unaccustomed business of hanging out clothes, to save women" as an act "more chivalrous than Raleigh's throwing his cloak in front of Elizabeth."

All in all, the Brook Farmers seem to have seen their community as a veritable Eden, "a true life," as Elizabeth Peabody wrote, "which aims beyond the highest star, [yet] is redolent of the healthy earth."

Bronson Alcott went further than his colleagues at Brook Farm as regards the relationship of the sexes. He considered women to be spiritually superior to men. Sex was unimportant to women, he believed, and therefore they lived on a plane of existence close to the gods. That Alcott sounds more like Ann Lee than like Emerson is not so surprising as one would think, for the believed Mother Ann to be the great religious leader of the century. His vision of redemption in America likewise brings us full circle back to the Shakers. His statement, "There [in America] if anywhere, is the second Eden to be planted, in which the divine seed is to bruise the head of evil and restore man to his rightful communion with God in the Paradise of Good," is reminiscent of this Shaker doctrine, taken from *A Summary View of the Millenial Church, or United Society of Believers (commonly called Shakers):* "As the emblem and personification of Moral Love, Woman must ere long give the ruling tone to society; and Love itself, as the Spirit substance, must rule in the human heart. So the woman-seed shall bruise the serpent-head."

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10/11

KATE JENNINGS

You liked the idea
of flowers in the El station.
When we walked past, you tried
to cajole them to smiles, old
flower merchants.

Rain is slapping down
the final leaves, soggy
piles everywhere.
The only leaves left
are outside my window,
lemon leaves: you'd think
the sun was on them.

My fear for you is the tree
falling in the forest, soundless:
I would turn, turn savage,
were it a defense for you.

O sister, my friend,
when the bones of trees
fall, you are listening.
Dislocated leaves shift
through the wet grass,
sullen sulpher. Trying
to cajole the flower
merchants for you,
Maureen, I'm smiling
bigger than hell.

✪ Stories and poems by KATE JENNINGS have appeared in many periodicals in the last few years, including the *Carleton Miscellany, Commonweal,* and the *Virginia Quarterly Review.*

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Heinz Hartmann and the "Conflict-Free Sphere"

H. STUART HUGHES

The theoretician who was to make the critical leap beyond the ego's defenses to an assertion of its substantial autonomy was as authentic a Viennese and as respectful a disciple of Freud as one could ask for. In his family origins Heinz Hartmann was the most illustrious of the Central European converts to psychoanalysis, and throughout his life he carried himself with an air of effortless inborn distinction. His paternal grandfather had been both a prolific writer and a deputy to the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848. His father, a historian of Rome and professor at the University of Vienna, served as Austria's ambassador in Berlin after the First World War. His maternal grandfather had been called by Freud "the most eminent of all our Vienna physicians," and Hartmann himself was to marry a pediatrician from a leading medical family. Even the tutor who supervised his early education, Karl Seitz, was later to win fame as Social Democratic mayor of Vienna. To his more discerning friends, Hartmann seemed a man "whose major challenge in life must have been to protect his integrity and creativeness against an overflow of good fortune."

Born in 1894, Hartmann grew up without religion or even a sense of its loss. (The Jewish origins that his name suggests evidently lay buried in the past.) This lack of a religious problem—or of the moral torments springing from it—sharply distinguished his adolescent development from Wittgenstein's, whose social and cultural milieu in other respects so much resembled his own. Like Wittgenstein, Hartmann breathed from childhood an atmosphere in which artistic attainments were the stuff of life itself; like the future philosopher, who was five years his senior, he became an accomplished musician and learned through early acquaintance with his parents' prominent friends not to be dazzled by public reputations or to seek such prominence for himself.

After Hartmann settled on psychiatry as a career, he continued to cultivate a wide range of interests. In the spring of 1918 he attended the university lectures in Vienna with which Max Weber resumed teaching after more than a decade and a half of silence; in his subsequent writings Hartman was to return repeatedly to Weber as a methodological guide. A few years later, a stint of service in his father's embassy gave him a chance to observe politics at first hand. He was also unique among the Austrian psychoanalysts in maintaining contact with the Vienna Circle of philosophers. Even within his profession, he refused to limit himself to one branch or school. Having begun his work under the tutelage of conservative, experimentally oriented clinicians, he did not encounter psychoanalysis directly until the mid-1920s, when he underwent a training analysis in Berlin. Meantime, however, he had published an influential paper on the experimental validation of Freudian theory and begun to write a book on psychoanalytic

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✪ This essay is taken from *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought, 1930-1965*, the third volume in H. STUART HUGHES's investigation of intellectual history. Harper & Row will publish the book this January.

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fundamentals, which appeared in 1927. The clue to the respect that Hartmann had already won for himself as a young man lay in his unrivaled combination of rigorous training in experimental psychology, close study of psychoanalytic theory, varied clinical experience, and an ingrained concern for the arts, for social science, and for public affairs.

Such was the man who as he was turning forty received the honor (shared apparently by only one other) of being asked by Freud to undertake a second training analysis with the master himself. By 1934 the founder of psychoanalysis had become too weak to maintain a regular relationship with more than a few carefully selected individuals. His choice of Hartmann proved fortunate: the older man found a superbly qualified successor, the younger a chance to complete his intellectual and emotional preparation at the highest source. During his years with Freud, Hartmann pondered, and published nothing.

This period of turning inward came to an end in 1937 with his reading of the paper entitled "Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation" which little by little was to win its place as the most influential single post-Freudian piece of writing. The audience of analysts who originally heard it has been described as both "stunned" and unaware of its full implications. For Hartmann's presentation was so low-keyed and meticulous as to anticipate the objections of the theoretically inclined and to leave the rest at a loss. His purpose, he announced, was nothing less than to stake out the *"general* psychology," the *"general* theory of mental life," the promised land into which Freud himself, now engaged in his final meditation on the mission of Moses, had been unable to lead his followers.

The basis for such an intellectual program, Hartmann explained, the "meeting ground with nonanalytic psychology," was the ego psychology that the old master and his daughter had already been formulating. But Hartmann ventured far beyond them in the role he ascribed to the ego. In expanding what Freud had called its "organizing" system of functions and in characterizing its work of adaptation as "reality mastery," he markedly reduced the classic psychoanalytic emphasis on inner conflict. "Not every adaptation to the environment," Hartmann argued, "or every learning and maturation process" needed to be thought of as conflict-derived. A host of processes in the development of the individual—"perception, intention, object comprehension," and the like—went on in what he designated the ego's "conflict-free sphere." This sphere constituted the particular domain of "ego strength"—and in speaking of such strength in the traditional moral terms of "character" and "will" Hartmann came perilously close to revisionist vocabulary.

Beyond defining the conflict-free sphere, Hartmann added the hope that its study would "open up the no-man's land between sociology and psychoanalysis and thus extend the contribution of psychoanalysis to the social sciences." But he was not yet ready to specify what that contribution might be. He confined himself to speculating on the "hierarchies of values" which every social structure dictated to the individuals within it and on the ways in which psychoanalysis could help people sort out their relationship to those values. While "the deepening of a man's knowledge," he explained, might "change his valuations" by making him see where his true allegiances lay, it could not lead to an assertion of value itself. It was an illusion to think that such understanding could "provide the goals of action." In vigorously denying the existence of "a 'natural' value hierarchy" applicable to all men, and in rejecting the view that values could be *"derived* from psychoanalytic knowledge," Hartmann unequivocally aligned himself with Weber.

The same held true in delineating the bounds of rationality. "The realm of strictly rational action," Hartmann granted, had proved "rather narrower than some of us would expect." But like Weber he refused all "traffic" with those who bemoaned "the mind as the 'adversary of the soul'." The current task, he suggested, with a bow to Mannheim, was rather to put into perspec-

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tive the concept of rationality while adhering to rational method: "the tendency of psychoanalysis to enlighten must of necessity relativize the rationalistic doctrine of enlightenment." Hartmann was far from sharing Horkheimer and Adorno's despair of enlightenment itself. Yet he saw as they did that its claims must be tailored to the bitter ideological realities of the 1930s.

In the year that intervened between the reading of Hartmann's paper and its publication in more extended form, the tide of irrationality engulfed his homeland. The annexation of Austria obliged Hartmann, no less than Freud and his daughter, to leave their native city. But Hartmann hesitated longer than most of his colleagues to seek refuge in the English-speaking world. It was only after spending three more years in Paris and Switzerland that he finally reached New York in 1941.

Here he established himself both in private practice and in theoretical work with the ease which came naturally to him. Without striving for primacy, he found it devolving upon him: his personal enemies were few, and his admirers legion. Apparently his associates did not hold against him his aristocratic demeanor or his formidable cultural equipment; they regularly elected him to all the high offices in the international psychoanalytic movement in which he would consent to serve. One explanation for this lack of professional jealousy was his courteous, unpolemical manner of speaking and writing. Another was the fact that he remained unknown to the general public; in contrast to the fame that Fromm or Erikson enjoyed, Hartmann's circle of readers reached scarcely beyond the psychoanalytic community itself.

The three decades between his arrival in the United States and his death in 1970 might strike the casual observer as eventless. Indeed his shift of scene marked no break in his thought, which in its classic abstraction and conciseness passed easily across the Atlantic and from German into English. Yet it was in America and more particularly during his early and mid-fifties that Hartmann's powers of synthesis reached their full development. Around 1950 he published a cluster of papers—some of them in collaboration with his friends Ernst Kris and Rudolph M. Loewenstein—which together constitute the basic theoretical corpus of ego psychology.

These essays explored three matters that his original paper composed in Vienna had left tentative or uncertain: they spelled out the functions of the ego; they tried to fit Freud's terminology to the new material which the emphasis on the ego had opened up; and they provided at last some specification as to how the findings of psychoanalysis might illuminate the study of society.

The term "ego," Hartmann explained, was "often used in a highly ambiguous way, even among analysts." Hence it could best be defined in negative terms, to distinguish its psychoanalytic meaning from the various other meanings it had acquired in popular or philosophical usage. Viewed from the standpoint of Freudian therapy, it was "not synonymous with 'personality' or with 'individual'," it did "not coincide with the 'subject' as opposed to the 'object' of experience," and it was "by no means only the 'awareness' or the 'feeling' of one's own self." In analysis, the ego figured as "a concept of quite a different order." It was "a substructure of personality" and was "defined by its functions." These functions were far too numerous to catalog—more numerous than those of the id or the superego. But among the most important, one could mention adaptation to reality, action, thinking, and the defenses that Anna Freud had studied. Beyond and less tangible than these lay the set of functions commonly called "a person's character." And at a still further remove from the observable data of experience one could speak of the work of psychic "synthesis" or "organization."

The heterogeneity of these functions already threatened to land Hartmann in multiple complexities: as he listed them, the activities of the ego went on at levels of specificity so different as to be barely comparable one with another. Moreover, he compounded his problem by adopting from

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one of Freud's last theoretical essays the notion of a congenital element in the ego, the guess that it, no less than the id, had emerged from "the matrix of animal instinct." To ascribe to the ego so remote and basic a pedigree helped to buttress the newly won conviction of its autonomy. But by the same token it entailed a ramifying definition of its development as the "result of three sets of factors: inherited ego characteristics (and their interaction), influences of the instinctual drives, and influences of outer reality."

> Contrasts in the ego there are many: the ego has from its start the tendency to oppose the drives, but one of its main functions is also to help them toward gratification; it is a place where insight is gained, but also of rationalization; it promotes objective knowledge of reality, but at the same time, by way of identification and social adjustment, takes over in the course of its development the conventional prejudices of the environment; it pursues its independent aims, but it is also characteristic of it to consider the demands of the other substructures of personality. . . .*

Such apparent contradictions, Hartmann insisted, became more manageable when regarded "from an intrasystemic point of view." By this he evidently meant to suggest that the ego's widely varying aims derived from its separate functions and that these latter could be seen as fitting together provided one considered them on a sufficiently high plane of abstraction. For those who had learned in elemental Freudian terms to think of the ego as an embattled contestant in its daily struggle for survival against the superego and the id, such a rarefied explanation might offer little more than semantic deliverance.

To enhance still further the ego's newly won status, Hartmann urged his readers to assume that it disposed of "independent psychic energy." Earlier he had taken pains to point out that the energy in question—at least as revealed in analysis—had nothing in common with a "metaphysical" Bergsonian *élan vital;* it was "rather an operational concept, devised to coordinate observational data." Yet it was also apparent that the whole notion of energy, as a physical term, led ultimately back to biology. And with this recognition, Hartmann found himself in the most doubtful realm of Freud's theory—the question of drives and their crucial situation at the meeting point of his dynamic and economic modes of explanation. Here Hartmann frankly confessed his puzzlement. Aside from lamenting the fact that Freud's English translators had not seen fit to maintain the distinction between instinct and drive and had used the first expression indiscriminately for both, he treated the whole matter with extreme caution. He refused to "enter into a discussion of Freud's biological speculation." "Assumptions concerning . . . drives toward life or death," he added, facilitated "neither the 'fitting together' of existent propositions, nor the formulation of new ones," if one limited oneself, as he and his closest collaborators did, to hypotheses that could "now or in the foreseeable future be checked against empirical evidence, against data of clinical observation, developmental studies, or experimentation in normal or abnormal psychology." The clear implication was that it was safer to stick with a phenomenon such as sexuality, whose reality and force were undeniable.

Yet there was one of Freud's late additions to his energetic theory which Hartmann welcomed in elucidating the ego. The delineation of aggression as an independent drive Hartmann found indispensable to the work of the contemporary analyst. Having separated it out from the "death instinct" with which Freud had left it entangled, he felt free to devote some of his most meticulous pages to elaborating its aims, its derivatives, and its substitutes. For Hartmann the concept of aggression remained among the fundamentals of theory; Freud's duality of sex and aggressiveness passed over intact into his thought.

Hence it was logical that he should reject the course that had been proposed by a number of his colleagues "to confer

* "Comments on the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Ego" (originally read in 1949 and published in 1950), published in *Essays on Ego Psychology.*

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emeritus status on Freud's concept of instinctual drives, to pay respect to it" in the history of psychoanalysis, "but not to entrust it any longer with active duty in psychoanalytic theory." Hartmann described himself as "in sharpest opposition" to the assertion that the concept in question was "no longer useful." This fidelity to the founder's legacy was central to Hartmann's view of his own professional integrity. It suffused his discussion of the second major issue that he treated in his essays of the 1940s and 1950s—the extent to which orthodox theory still conformed to the findings of ego psychology.

His own starting point, he explained, was to accept "the complexity of psychoanalytic propositions" as Freud had left them—and, he might have added, as he himself had further complicated them. Such complexity, he argued, was "not accidental but necessary." The very term "psychoanalysis" referred to "a set of propositions" that were "internally cohesive, elaborated in some detail, and allowing for predictions of human behavior." Its "validation" constituted "a gradual and slow process" in which one assessed insights derived from many sources and in which multiple types of evidence had "to be taken into account, foremost among them clinical experiences and the study of child development" that Anna Freud had pioneered. "Under these conditions neatness in theorizing" (an apt self-characterization!) figured among the prime qualifications for undertaking to expand or refine the psychoanalytic corpus.

Against the theoretically tidy stood those whom Hartmann viewed, to borrow Jacob Burckhardt's expression, as "terrible simplifiers." Although he himself would never have spoken so categorically, the force of his scorn pierced through the measured politeness of his condemnation. For Hartmann the notion of "dissent" did not depend simply on the extent of agreement of new ideas "with similar ones proposed by Freud" or his heirs. It derived also from the fact that the self-styled innovators forgot that the propositions of psychoanalytic theory were arranged in a hierarchical order and that to disturb this order could lead to impoverishing the entire structure. The dissenters tended "to fragmentize . . . theory, to stress one set of propositions and to neglect others." The result was a "simplified version, reduced to fewer factors, based on fewer concepts," which far from improving that theory put it "in danger of becoming atrophied."

Prominent among the abbreviators figured certain well-known students of culture and personality. It was characteristic of them, Hartmann maintained, to fail to reckon with the whole range of psychoanalytic thinking, "to polemicize with insistence against views contained in the earlier writings of Freud and his collaborators" while ignoring the subsequent "reformulations" that ego psychology had devised. This neglect, he thought, was particularly unfortunate in separating natural allies. For ego psychology might "well suggest the most fruitful and pertinent propositions for interdisciplinary cooperation." Such cooperation was already implicit in Hartmann's call to make psychoanalytic theory "general" in its scope. It stimulated his observations on the third problem which his work in Vienna had left unresolved—the relation of psychoanalysis to the study of society.

Rather early in his explorations—as early as 1944—it became apparent to him that anthropology offered a more promising field for cooperative endeavor than either sociology or history. Much of what sociology studied in statistical or quantitative fashion, Hartmann had found, stemmed "from those layers of the personality" that were "not in the center of analytic interest and research." It was above all in explaining "human conflicts" that psychoanalysis could contribute to sociological knowledge. As for history, the full application of Freudian theory could begin only when the historians themselves turned their attention to those "spheres of life" which the analysts regarded as primary. And this sort of data gathering as yet barely existed. Up to now, Hartmann lamented, echoing all-unknowing a plea that Lucien Febvre had made just three years earlier in the silence of

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occupied France, historical research had unearthed very little about "how, in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the eighteenth century, . . . the feeding, weaning, and toilet training of the infant was managed, or in what way the parents . . . handled the child's sexual and aggressive drives."

With these matters, of course, the anthropologists were already familiar. They were the ones most expert in delimiting "the plasticity of the infantile situation"—the degree to which one culture or another could mold a young personality to its own requirements. Such "social compliance," Hartmann observed, helped to determine both the "mobility of the ego" and the "severity of the superego," along with the life roles that individuals fitted themselves to assume. Seven years after this tentative assessment, he was as convinced as ever that "reports on child care and child rearing" constituted "the most fruitful and the most suggestive contact between psychoanalysis and anthropology." But he was becoming more wary of the anthropologists' relativist attitude toward cultural norms and less willing to remain the humble learner.

In his fullest statement on the subject—this time, as so often in his major theoretical essays, writing in collaboration with Kris and Loewenstein—he challenged the anthropologists' assumption that the cultural bent which derived from "institutional regulation" was necessarily primary to both the observer and the people observed. In the observer, he argued, at least in the analytic situation, cultural background might be "of comparatively minor relevance"; it was far from true that an analyst reared and trained in the West was incapable of understanding the emotional disorders of a patient from another culture. For the analyst was "likely to be less impressed by the . . . range of differences in everyday behavior than the anthropologist" and more inclined to view such differences as of diminishing importance as the psychic exploration moved "from the periphery to the center." Beyond that, Hartmann thought it inadvisable to draw sweeping conclusions from evidence on child rearing: "Similar experiences in childhood," he had discovered, tended "to produce the most varied results." The social or familial pressures acting upon the child were no more than "initial links in a chain of influences." And among those influences "a decisive point had been insufficiently taken into account: the mother's personal attitude," much of it unconscious, toward her offspring and the fact of her own motherhood.

Thus while still respectful and cooperative in his view of anthropology, Hartmann insisted on two crucial divergences in emphasis. In nominalist vein, he drew attention once more to the uniqueness of individual experience; as a universalist, he stressed what was common to the human condition and transcended the barriers of culture. "Under the impact of cultural anthropology," he observed, "the question how man" behaved "under any given set of circumstances" tended "to be neglected in favor of the question how a member of a specific culture" behaved. The contradiction between Hartmann's two points of difference was only apparent: both derived from his deepest professional and personal conviction. The "autonomy of the ego"—its nurture and its strengthening—united them in an aim that was alike particular to the individual and universal in range. And it was, Hartmann surmised, less esteemed in the "primitive" societies which the anthropologists preferred to call "preliterate" than in a society such as his own in which scientific thinking had for centuries combated the remnants of "magical attitudes."

Hartmann's reflections on anthropology had already led him deep into the problem of values. This problem—which had lurked in the back of his mind for a quarter-century—he finally undertook to unravel in his last sustained piece of writing, a lecture on psychoanalysis and ethics delivered in 1959 and published in extended form in 1960.

With Weber, Hartmann had all along insisted that the notion of reason involved no more than the weighing of means against ends, or of ends against their con-

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sequences, and was incapable of establishing the rationality of any particular human goal. If, then, psychoanalysis, as a technique of reason in action, debarred itself from providing "ultimate moral aims or general moral imperatives," if it treated such matters simply as "psychological givens," was there no way in which the theorist or the therapist could offer ethical assistance? Into this treacherous terrain, Hartmann advanced with his characteristic prudence. He rejected most of what passed for psychiatric counsel among the uninitiated and the methodologically sloppy: he refused to speak of social or cultural systems as "healthy" or "sick," adding that even the concept of "maturity" had been frequently abused. Yet he did not throw up his hands in despair; he surmised that there were a few things that psychoanalysis could venture to say, and in specifying what these might be he turned once more to the congenial field of anthropology.

With the passage of time he had come to the conclusion that the anthropologists might not be such thoroughgoing relativists as they themselves conventionally supposed. "Common elements shared by different moral systems" had recently begun to appear in their work:

> Murder, unlimited lying and stealing are everywhere valued negatively; also something like a principle of "reciprocity" is recognized everywhere. . . . Some incest regulations are universal; nowhere is cannibalism regular practice. Also, the duty of the adults to take care of the children is generally accepted; a certain respect for private property is, too, and so is respect for the dead of one's own group. The analyst will be ready to accept, he will indeed expect, that there are such commonalities.*

Since human beings in all cultures went through comparable experiences in growing up—and more especially in the formation of their superegos—it was only natural that the anthropologist or the analyst should encounter a few virtually universal ethical valuations.

Beyond the common condition of mankind, Hartmann speculated that psychoanalysis itself might offer elements of a moral code. In its attitude toward the two basic human drives, he found it drawing a significant practical distinction: "full discharge of the sexual drives" it considered "rarely as damaging to society" as people had "assumed in the past; the same" could not "be said of the full discharge of aggression." In his relatively "relaxed" stand toward sexuality and in his concern for the social dangers of aggressive behavior, Hartmann's view of psychoanalysis recalled what Fromm had argued a decade earlier about its place in the tradition of humanist ethics. But unlike Fromm, Hartmann refrained from spelling out the implications of his moral obiter dicta. He refused to formulate a world view; he recoiled from the role of the psychoanalyst as preacher. Following the example of his master Freud, he kept his own high personal standards to himself. Here once again one can discriminate the nuanced position of the psychoanalytic Center as against the moralizing of the Right wing and the ultrapermissiveness of the Left.

Hartmann similarly cleaved to Freud's own conviction in stressing "self-knowledge" and "intellectual integrity" as central to the psychoanalytic ethic. "In analysis," he suggested, man was "confronted with a more encompassing reach of 'his good' and 'his bad' than he had been aware of before." Facing up to one's "blind spots" could "give to moral awareness a depth dimension" that it would otherwise have lacked. "All great religions," Hartmann added, had "aimed at this confrontation," however they might differ with psychoanalysis in their "postulates," their "tools," and their "intent." Yet to urge acceptance of reality did "not imply . . . passive submission to a given social system." On political ideology as on so much else, Hartmann held to a delicate equilibrium. Like Wittgenstein, he preferred to set the limits beyond which lay the unsayable rather than to specify what could be said within those boundaries. Further than that he would not go.

With his accustomed modesty of man-

*From *Psychoanalysis and Moral Values.*

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ner, but in full consciousness of his magisterial responsibility toward his own profession, Hartmann had tried to chart for his colleagues the future of the theory in which they had been trained. Yet his greatest contribution lay in what he had done to rescue its past. Freud had "left his followers with a terrible dilemma at the very heart of the psychoanalytic enterprise": by defining the ego as the weakest of the structural triad, he had suggested that its chances for victory in its struggles with the superego and the id were slim indeed—and implied that the outlook for successful therapy was correspondingly doubtful. Hartmann endeavored "to lead psychoanalytic theory out of this dead end. . . . In the language of Freud's military metaphor," he "placed many more battalions at the disposal of the ego. . . And he did so tactfully, painlessly, authoritatively and unobtrusively. . . . He accomplished a major piece of theoretical surgery without shedding a drop of blood."*

In establishing a conflict-free sphere of ego development and ego functioning, Hartmann delineated processes which were initially unconscious and yet eventually capable of contributing to rational, purposive action; he grounded his ego in the instinctual substratum of the psyche while allowing for its almost infinite elaboration at the conscious level. Those who knew him best found it "by no means accidental" that he had hit on the concept of the conflict-free: it reflected his own self-confidence and "cheerful tranquility." For the run of analysts, however—particularly those tormented by doubts about themselves and the viability of their profession—the serene abstraction of his prose raised unexpected and highly sophisticated difficulties in the very course of dealing with basic and familiar ones. Moreover, it merely hinted at the promised alliance between social science and a psychoanalytic theory which had become "general" in scope. And within the terms of that theory it stubbornly adhered to a vocabulary that had already been stretched far beyond its original context.

Thus despite the precision of Hartmann's mind and the care with which he chiseled his phrases, it was often difficult to determine how his lofty formulations could be applied to the realities of clinical or social research. Or perhaps better, his intellectual refinement itself entrapped him in the delicate web of theory. He lacked the temperament of the ruthless innovator who cuts through a welter of complexities and emerges with a startling new formulation. He hated to let go any precious strand of reasoning in his theoretical patrimony. He loved to demonstrate how two lines of thought that apparently contradicted each other could be woven together in a way that gave each its due. Like the immediate predecessors of Copernicus, he "expended . . . tremendous energy . . . in 'adding epicycles' " to the metapsychology he had inherited.

This metapsychology, of course, consisted of figures of speech and heuristic devices. And as a collection of metaphors it presented the further difficulty of attempting to describe a set of activities—the mind—that by its very nature defied exact delineation. If all scientific language of necessity explains phenomena in terms of something else, more tangible and closer to home, the elucidation of mental events is obliged to operate at a level and in a vocabulary even more remote from verifiable reality than is true of ordinary investigation into the natural or the social world. The figures of speech in which it is couched—whether spatial or energetic—suggest a concreteness utterly foreign to the material at hand.

It would be quite wrong to imply that Hartmann was unaware of these pitfalls. His own mind was far too scrupulous to entertain for a moment the thought that matters "really" went on as Freud had described them. But he wrote as though they did: in his prose, the four classic metapsychological modes figured as near-actualities. And from there it was only a step to relapse once more into dogmatic certainty, a step that simplified life for Hartmann's unphilosophical American admirers. He

* Daniel Yankelovich and William Barrett, *Ego and Instinct: The Psychoanalytic View of Human Nature.* Revised edition.

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had correctly seen that Freud's concept of drives ranked along with the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious, and between the ego and the id, among the essentials whose abandonment would reduce psychoanalytic interpretation to a flat meaninglessness. Without it, the inner drama would lack an initial thrust to set it in motion. But there was no such imperative to try to explain what the drives were; as Hartmann himself recognized, this sort of explanation lay in the realm of biology—or possibly of metaphysics. More particularly, retaining as he did the notion of psychic energy—or even units of energy—as their basic characteristic encumbered the theory of drives and severely reduced its plausibility.

Hartmann had rescued the human ego and made welcoming gestures to his colleagues in the social sciences. He had notably enhanced the range and the internal consistency of psychoanalytic theory. But he had not solved the problems of vocabulary and epistemology that Freud had left to his heirs. And this was what sympathizers outside the psychoanalytic fraternity were demanding with ever greater insistence as Hartmann's life drew to a close.

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The Stages of Joseph Papp

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Everyone who publishes theater criticism in New York has a Joseph Papp story. Here is mine. In October 1970 the late Jack MacGowran appeared in a Broadway play that flopped. Papp evidently knew that MacGowran had done a program of Beckett readings six months earlier in Paris with Beckett's approval; and Papp promptly whisked MacGowran downtown to do the Beckett readings in one of his theaters. I saw the program, enjoyed it greatly, and reviewed it favorably in the *New Republic*. Because I had recently written adverse comments on several Papp productions, I thought it only fair to note in my review that MacGowran was being presented on one of the stages of the Public Theater, "whose producer, Joseph Papp, whatever his defects, is certainly not short on energy and enterprise."

At 9:00 A.M. on the day that the review appeared, Papp telephoned me and said angrily, "What do you mean, my defects?"

Well, this article is what I mean, but it is also what I mean about his virtues. Whatever one's opinion of this or the other of his many productions, Papp demands serious discussion because he is an insistent cultural phenomenon. He is now unquestionably the most prominent person in the American theater. He operates in New York, which, unfortunately, is still the theater capital of the United States and thus the capital of theater publicity. He operates in almost every field of the contemporary theater. He began and still works on Off Broadway. He has produced on Broadway. He is busy in the workshop-experimental sector called Off Off Broadway. He runs a summer Shakespeare festival in Central Park and some mobile theaters that tour greater New York. And, cutting across all these categories, he has long been active as a producer of black theater, presenting plays written, directed, and performed by blacks.

All his activities have been intertwined with a policy of free admissions, where possible, and low-priced tickets where it isn't, and with theater committed to social relevance and community service. Papp contrasts vividly with the previous most prominent individual in the American theater, David Merrick, who was in the spotlight during the 1960s. Merrick was the quintessential smooth, clever, ruthless, big-business operator, a rapist of success, a producer whose shows were sometimes mammoth hits *(Hello, Dolly)* but were uninteresting in any serious way even when they were hits. He made enough money to establish a tax-loss foundation that occasionally produced a valuable play that had been proved elsewhere *(Marat/Sade)*, but neither in this foundation work nor in his original productions did he show any distinct taste or policy, and his career has had no effect whatever except on his and other bank accounts. Papp is a very different Number One figure. I think it is fair to say that Papp is more interested in his policy and his goals than he is in any one production. The productions implement the policy—something for which there is no analogy in Mer-

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rick. To investigate that Papp policy, how it grew and where it led, we must begin at the beginning.

Papp was born in Brooklyn in 1921, the son of an immigrant Polish trunk-maker, Shmuel Papirofsky, and a mother born in Lithuania. (Papp used his full surname until he went to work for CBS in the 1950s; they shortened it for him.) He had little formal education—he never went past high school—but in his youth he soaked up the reverence for literary-musical culture that was endemic in Jewish immigrant communities, including reverence for Shakespeare. In 1941 he joined the Navy and spent four years in the Pacific, where he was assigned to Special Services. He wrote and produced and directed shows for servicemen. After his discharge in 1945 he was in California, and he used his G.I. Bill privileges to enroll in the Hollywod Actors Laboratory. This group had been organized by actors such as Morris Carnovsky and J. Edward Bromberg, former members of the Group Theater in New York during the 1930s, now living and working on the West Coast. The Lab was much influenced by the Group's aesthetic reliance on Stanislavsky and its view of the theater as a social-political mediator. Papp studied acting and directing there, then became an executive of the Lab. He "also taught acting to working people at the California Labor School" (his words eight years later before the House Committee on Un-American Activities). In 1951 Papp got a job with a road company of *Death of a Salesman* as stage manager and understudy; at the end of the tour he went to work as a stage manager for CBS-TV in New York.

I make no attempt here to psychoanalyze at a remove, but Papp's psyche would have to be prodigiously torturous to keep one from making a simple inference about what happened next. In 1953 while he was working in straight commercial TV, Naming the Game and Garry Moore-ing, he got together a group of actors and began to work on scenes from Shakespeare in space provided by a lower-East Side Sunday school. With his childhood background and his six years of conditioning in socially oriented Hollywood groups, it was inevitable that he would be dissatisfied with his bread-and-butter, or milk-and-honey, daily job, that he would find a way to make it subsidize more substantial work.

Why did the group choose Shakespeare instead of more topical social plays? Here are some possible reasons. First and fundamentally, Papp has a genuine love for Shakespeare, which I would not want even to seem to deride in anything that follows. Second, working on classics evidently satisfied a cultural imperative that had been drummed into him as into many thousands of children raised by Jewish immigrant parents. To honor the freedom of the New World as against the restrictions of Eastern Europe, the watchwords, brighter than success in a good number of those households, were education and culture. Third, and marrying the two reasons above, there was never any conflict for Papp between cultural obligation and social relevance in his allegiance to Shakespeare, no choice between ivory tower and barricades. This is the man who wrote of *Henry V* twelve years later: "Although this play is a paean to the glory of England, it transcends flagwaving and is transformed into a statement of triumph for all ragged men fighting everywhere against impossible odds." (And by that time, as we'll see, he had changed his ways of *doing* Shakespeare.)

The next step for Papp in those early days was to establish a unique relationship with an audience. He began this the following year, 1954, when his group presented its first program free of charge, then got a charter from the Board of Regents of the State of New York as the Shakespeare Workshop. In 1956 they presented their first summer season at the East River Amphitheater, again free of charge. The following summer they played for the first time as the Shakespeare Festival (the name still used) in Central Park in a makeshift theater; the next winter they played indoors in the Heckscher Theater of the Children's Center on upper Fifth Avenue, far above the chic belt, close to Spanish Harlem. (Which is where I first saw them—*As You Like It* with George C. Scott as

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Jaques.) Consistently they were working with small subsidies and charged no admission.

The next summer, on June 19, 1958, Papp was summoned before HUAC. He denied that he was then a Communist, took the Fifth Amendment twelve times when asked whether he had ever been a Communist, and steadfastly refused to implicate anyone else. That very day CBS fired him. With typical scrappiness Papp refused to accept this decision, took the matter to arbitration, and was reinstated, to enjoy the luxury of resigning in April 1960. (Twelve years after that, he got an extra bit of revenge, eaten fairly hot: he and the Festival were engaged by CBS at high wages to do a series of large-scale TV shows. The engagement was short-lived—there was censorship trouble on the second show—but Papp must have had some personal pleasure out of it and surely had some money for his theaters.)

After his HUAC-related troubles Papp concentrated on his Shakespeare Festival. I omit details of the opposition he encountered with city officials and in legal tangles. He overcame them all with magnificent drive, and with something else that was accruing to him. By the time he moved into this phase of his career with and for the Festival, he naturally had begun to get considerable newspaper space, and he began to acquire a persona as battler for the public cultural weal. Part of this persona was certainly his due: whatever one's opinion of his work, he was unquestionably trying to serve the community. Part of it was because of the press's perennial eagerness to characterize in the large; it gives them an easy way to handle people about whom they have to write often. Part of it, one began to sense quite early, was developed histrionically: Papp had found a role in the Erving Goffman sense and felt comfortable in it, a role that fitted both his aims and his ego.

One result of this tripartite persona was the inauguration in 1961 of the 2,300-seat open-air Delacorte Theater in Central Park, where the Shakespeare Festival performs every summer free of charge. Further, Papp soon organized mobile theaters to take Shakespeare to other parks and to playgrounds.

As he moved into the 1960s, some qualities began to become clear in his productions themselves. First, to clarify, not every Papp production is actually directed by Papp. This is a blessing. Some of his productions have been adequate or better, but I have never seen one directed by himself that I liked. Almost from the beginning, he has engaged a number of directors to work for him, to handle much of his schedule. Through his choices he has of course manifested qualities in himself, and since every one of these productions has been supervised and ultimately "passed" by Papp, his relation to them has been close. His stamp—at least of approval—is on everything.

The 1958 production of *As You Like It* at the Heckscher Theater was directed by Stuart Vaughan. It was fairly early in Papp's producing career, and it seemed to me that, with the unmistakable though then merely eccentric exception of George C. Scott, it was just one more in the long line of dull, conventional Shakespeare that had seemed fusty when I first met it in the early 1930s. In those depression days some unemployed actors had banded together under an experienced Shakespeare exploiter named Percival Vivian, had gotten some old costumes and scenery and the huge Century Theater (since demolished), all on a percentage basis, and had presented a repertory of miserable Shakespeare productions, calling themselves a festival for as long as they could persuade high-school and college teachers to dragoon their students into attending. I was then in drama school, therefore more demanding than I am now, and I was disgusted by the argument that at least these students were getting the chance to see Shakespeare, at low prices, too. In 1958 at the Heckscher I thought of that earlier festival.

So I shied away from Papp's Shakespeare for a few years. The next productions of his that I recall were outdoors in Central Park: *The Merchant of Venice* (1962) with George C. Scott as Shylock, now assuredly

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mad and absolutely irresistible; *Antony and Cleopatra* (1963) with Colleen Dewhurst giving promise of greatness (still unachieved, I sadly think); and that same year another *As You Like It,* with Paula Prentiss, alas. In these productions and others Papp was beginning to show marked changes from Century Theater fustiness. These changes had nothing to do with aesthetics: they were demotic, even civic responses that dovetailed perfectly, I should think, with Papp's interests and bent. It was one of the happiest conjunctures that I can think of in the theater of my time.

Soon after the end of World War II the population of New York began to change greatly. White emigration to the suburbs increased the proportion of blacks in the city, and there was also a great postwar influx of Puerto Ricans. In fifteen years or so the very color of the crowd in the streets had markedly changed. In social dynamics the blacks and the Latins became more self-confident and more mobile. The theater, which had previously been "downtown" and remote for nonwhite New Yorkers, was now a possible part of their lives. These changes were hugely important to Papp.

He cared about minorities—quite sincerely, I'm sure, as a citizen and a humanitarian. But these demographic changes also gave him the perfect opportunity he needed in his theater. Here he was, a producer without any evident shred of artistic mandate, a director of the most pedestrian sort, who had fervent cultural concerns and social empathy. And here he found himself in a city involved in swift social transition, where ethnic minorities were coming rapidly to the fore. Perfect! Now he had a mode, a *mark,* for his Shakespeare. Instead of just bland old "good-for-you" Shakespeare, he could make the classics respond to the topical situation, make them—in the tiredest term of our era—relevant. The fact (for me, anyway) that he had no sheerly creative gifts, no artistic talent, could be submerged in matchmaking between Shakespeare and the several ghettos, by making the theater accessible and enjoyable to *all* previously excluded and/or ignored groups.

The obvious first move was to mix his casts. Increasingly through the 1960s he used nonwhite actors in white roles (the Henry in that *Henry V,* as just one instance, was Robert Hooks). But the more intrinsic way in which Papp responded to—encouraged—the change in the audience's composition was in his style of production. There seemed now to be one overarching precept for his work: the play must be made interesting to those outside the cultural elite; the play must entertain a black or Puerto Rican or working-class white who has felt excluded from that elite and now has no ambition to belong to it.

The best-known example of this process, because it moved to Broadway after its Delacorte premiere, is Papp's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1971). It had a Puerto Rican Proteus and a black Silvia and a rock score. The whole tone of the production was: "See? Shakespeare can be fun. Forget all about the poetry and all that Elizabethan stuff. We can make it *now.* Watch. Listen." It was Papp's *Henry V* thesis of topicality carried to its prosaic extreme. Certainly a lot of people enjoyed the show, but one thing they were *not* enjoying was *Two Gentlemen of Verona.* The same sort of mixed casting and of rock music, the same rib-nudging commonalty could be imposed on *The Bacchae* or *The Sheep Well* and could result in a virtually identical show that would have no more or less to do with Euripides or Lope de Vega than it had to do with Shakespeare. The extrapolations and impositions would meet and fuse somewhere on their own.

But this method was Papp manifest, Papp doing what he could do, Papp seizing the day. To be just, I must add that occasionally he made a good choice of director to implement his policy, in which case the transpositions or alterations were locked into place with optimum effect. For instance, Michael Kahn directed *Measure for Measure* in 1966 as a play seemingly about the urban problems of Vienna at the time, but still managed to make the moral-metaphysical dilemmas ring true. In the best of Papp's Shakespeare that I have seen, A. J. Antoon directed *Much Ado*

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about Nothing in 1972, which also moved to Broadway and then to television, as an American play. Antoon set it in Teddy Roosevelt's U.S.A., which was near enough for recognition yet far enough for this play's romance. The taking ragtime score by Peter Link seemed paradoxically the opposite of an attempt to modernize: it supplied a leaven of nostalgia. There were chasms in the cast and crudities of execution, but Antoon caught the gradations of the character comedy and a good deal of the poetry; so the production did what "versions" so often try and usually bungle—it brought Shakespeare close. (Equal emphasis on the last two words.)

By 1966 the Shakespeare Festival at the Delacorte and the mobile theaters were not enough for Papp. Apparently he felt that topicality-through-classics, though paramount, was not everything. There was one whole corps of theater workers with whom he had not yet been in touch: playwrights, living, working playwrights. He wanted to add to his connection with his audience the instrument of contemporaneity.

He entered a field here—new plays, especially new American plays—that was in quite a different state from the somnolence of "official" Shakespeare which he had disrupted with demographic ideas. The Broadway picture, for new plays, was dim, but Papp was not then interested in Broadway. The Off Broadway scene was busy; the Off Off Broadway scene—often amateur in personnel but unconstrained in content and unconventional in method—was teeming. Through these two channels American playwrights were pouring out works, usually of no great individual merit but imaginatively ambitious and free flowing—celebrations, among other things, of the very fact that these relatively new channels for playwrights existed.

One can guess, on the basis of Papp's past and subsequent profile, that one reason he went into the field of new plays was that he chafed at the thought that so much was going on in the theater of which he had no part. Possibly Shakespeare began to seem a limitation to him, not only in contact and topicality but in ambition. At any rate, when he went into new-play production, he went in big, impressively. In 1966 he and his associate producer, Bernard Gersten, raised the money to buy the Astor Library, a beautiful century-old building downtown on Lafayette Street. (By coincidence with Papp's family background, it had for many decades done important service to America as the headquarters of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. If not Papp's parents themselves, surely many of their friends had passed through those doors in search of American futures.) Papp, quite rightly, had the building officially designated as a city landmark, then converted the spacious interior into four theaters for plays, a film theater, a concert room, galleries, and workshops. Admission was charged, but it was kept as low as possible; besides, there were subscription discounts and student rates.

By this time Papp's persona was a part of the metropolitan landscape. By this time he had not only developed charisma, he was one of the people responsible for the vogue of that word. He was now, in his new field, entering competition with already going non-Broadway theaters like La Mama and Theater Genesis and many others, for the best in new plays; and with the help of his persona, he quickly surged ahead in that competition. He not only got many of the livelier scripts, he produced them in ways that smacked of daring and adventure. He combined his ambition with a talent for publicity—the best kind of publicity, because in the middle of the spotlight's glare he could appear selfless and dedicated.

The bright ball kept rolling. At the Public Theater, as the downtown complex was collectively named, one of the first productions was *Hair*. The success of that show—there, subsequently on Broadway, then in theaters around the world—needs no retelling. At the Public Theater, allowing for occasional exceptions like a revival of *Trelawny of the "Wells,"* Papp pursued two policies, not mutually exclusive. The first was the production of black theater.

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He was not limited here, as in Shakespeare, to integrated casting: he could do solidly ethnic work—black plays by black playwrights with black actors and directors. One such play, Charles Gordone's *No Place to Be Somebody*, won the Pulitzer prize in 1970. That this play, in my view, was of small worth, that the bestowal of the prize seemed a joint confession of that prize's bankruptcy and reverse Uncle-Tomming, is beside at least one point: the Papp tide was swelling, and tides that swell *keep* swelling, at least for a while. Also a part of his ethnic policy were Hispanic plays in Spanish, but these never got comparable attention or publicity because of the language barrier.

His other chief policy was his openness to new, young theater people. If I had to choose the preeminent contribution that Papp has made, it would be this: the way he has altered the dreadful situation that used to prevail for newcomers in the New York theater. Until about 1950 the New York theater meant, predominantly, Broadway, and to the newcomer Broadway presented a high, blank, cold wall that only a few could scale or find a crack in. Talent was by no means the prime factor for progress or even, sometimes, a pertinent one. A successful actress in her fifties said to me recently, "I know I wasn't among the most talented of my generation. I just had more stamina and more luck." The situation improved somewhat with the growth of Off Off Broadway, but Papp made the single biggest change. It began with his Shakespeare Festival; it spread quickly with the Public Theater, naturally, because now he was also open to new playwrights. No, he wasn't merely open to new playwrights and other theater people—he went looking for them. And he found them: not only writers but directors, scenic designers, lighting designers, and administrators. I don't mention names because I can't mention half and because I don't share his high opinion of at least half. My point just here is not to criticize his choices but to praise this impulse of his.

In the early 1970s an altering Papp began to emerge. This is of course inaccurate: people rarely change, they simply become more, or less, what their chromosomes and conditioning dictate, as the circumstances of their lives nourish or deprive them. Hegel said that "the organic individual produces himself; it makes of itself what it is implicitly." Circumstances were certainly nourishing some qualities that had long been implicit in Papp. Now he seemed to succumb to the age-old and most dangerous seduction of success, the belief that it couldn't have happened to him if he hadn't deserved it. This is sometimes true, but it is the place in one's mind, in the back or in the forefront, to which one assigns the belief that determines behavior. Papp now began to seem more and more as if he had judged himself and found himself not wanting. It was as if the servant of the people had begun to spell the operative word in that phrase with a capital S.

He thought of expanding. He formulated the idea of an American National Theater Service Agency which would tour serious new plays around the country, possibly editing them wherever necessary to accommodate differing intellectual and moral attitudes. The agency would be supported by government and foundation subsidy. The Papp name was now so magical that the Rockefeller Foundation gave him $80,000 just to explore the idea.

This agency idea ran into sharp opposition that anyone else in the field could have foreseen. Papp, intoxicated with his purpose and his persona, declared that his aim was "to break into all that barrenness out there to restore theater to its rightful place as a creative, social force in this country." Never mind that the use of the romantic word "restore" was typical of theater pronouncements even by the otherwise hard-headed; there were some fifty professional resident theaters "out there," as well as dozens of experimental groups and numerous university theaters of at least admirable ambition, some of them with professionals on staff. Many of the directors "out there" did not exactly subscribe to Papp's term "barren," and they read

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Papp's thesis as deliberate myopia in order to push a plan that proved how much the country needed him. The imperial fit was on him, some of them thought. The scent of Eighteenth Brumaire was in the air; the republican general was en route to becoming First Consul. Reactions were sharp, and Papp's national scheme dissolved.

But possibly he lost interest in it anyway because another addition to the republican empire was in the offing. In March 1973 it was announced that Papp would take over the Vivian Beaumont and Forum theaters at Lincoln Center in New York.

The history of those two theaters, upstairs and downstairs in the same building, had been brief but full of woe. The Lincoln Center Repertory Company, which in fact had never been a repertory company, had begun in 1964 in a different building while its present quarters were being completed. There and subsequently it had been under three managements: Elia Kazan and Robert Whitehead, who combined 1930s directing theories with glitzy Broadway culture; Herbert Blau and Jules Irving, who, at the other extreme, combined heavy intellectual atmosphere with professional amateurism; and then the solo management of Jules Irving, which was nerveless, improvisatory, devoid of distinction.

The original Lincoln Center aim had been to build a great permanent repertory theater in New York. Maybe that is impossible. Resident theaters in other American cities, even such cosmopolitan cities as San Francisco and Washington, do not face the two constant pressures of such a theater in New York. First, choices for New York audiences are much wider than anywhere else in America. Second, New York audiences are more demanding. This is certainly not to say, I add as wryly as I can, that New York has a theater public of epicures, but it does mean that they are used to seeing the latest and newest of everything, that they have some standards in physical production, and that they have no gratitude at all for the mere fact that they can see a live theatrical presentation in their city.

To prosper, a "classic" New York resident theater ought to have two characteristics. First, it ought to have a level of production that is never lower than the best in the country. I don't mean the guest appearances of expensive stars and directors. If it is going to bother to be a resident theater at all, it must retain for long periods of time an ensemble of quality under a purposeful, gifted directorate. But the economics of the American theater and the competition from the commercial theater and from films make such a condition virtually impossible.

Second, since it ought to be the best theater in what has been the theater capital of the country for 150 years, it ought to be (as the established theaters of European capitals are) the place where the nation's great dramatic literature is kept alive and visible. But there is little great American drama. After you have pulled out two or three late O'Neill plays, one or two by Tennessee Williams, even strained yourself with an Arthur Miller, you are then stuck, in American fare, with a quasi-pop, somewhat "cute" series of revivals, some of them enjoyable but not exactly a *raison d'être* for a national rep. This is not much of a handicap for other American resident theaters because they do not bear the "national" onus—except possibly in Washington—and because, still, any good theater production is some sort of manna in some sort of desert. The resident theater of the nation's theatrical capital does not have, in American dramatic literature, the artistic, the *psychological* foundation that in needs. It can serve as a "living museum" of great European drama, a very important function but something less than the ideal. Even the National Theater of Reykjavik has in its repertory a large proportion of Icelandic classics.

These two problems, one obvious and one subtle, cannot be solved by any manager of the Lincoln Center theaters; nevertheless, they face him, obviously and subtly, if he wants to establish a theater comparable with the famous ones of the world, which had ostensibly been the original aim. Those problems, added to the various

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personal deficiencies of the different managers, had ground down the administrations before Papp arrived. So grievously had the theater suffered in reputation that it was in terrible financial straits. Like the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera, which are also at Lincoln Center, the theater runs at a loss; unlike the Philharmonic and the Metropolitan, the theater attracted relatively little in donations and subsidies because no one had much faith in it or got much *réclame* from supporting it. That, quite clearly, was one of the reasons why Papp was chosen. He could attract money.

From that point of view he was unquestionably the best choice. He was hot. He was rising. He seemed, in the public's eye and in the eyes of most of the eager New York critical corps, to be incapable of doing much wrong. He was fast becoming a municipal hero. Little could have pleased Papp more than the *New Yorker* cartoon that appeared shortly after his Lincoln Center appointment. It showed the Manhattan skyline and, arching over it like a rainbow, the legend "A Joseph Papp Production." The cartoon was striking because it made one think that this was what Papp had had in mind all along, particularly since he didn't give up anything to take on Lincoln Center. He just added those two theaters to his string.

One of the first announcements that he made in relation to his new post was about money. In March 1973 he said, "Before we put one foot in the door, we must have in hand or in assurances $5 million." He set a deadline for May. By May he had put some feet in the door without that sum, but he had done astonishingly well. Mrs. Mitzi E. Newhouse had given him a million—the downstairs Forum was renamed in her honor—and there were healthy assurances and prospects from various foundations and government agencies.

A second simultaneous announcement was radically more important. Papp exactly reversed previous Lincoln Center theater policy. The larger theater upstairs, the Beaumont, which had lamely been trying to become our leading "standard" theater, would be devoted to new plays, responsive to our era and problems. The smaller theater below it, now the Newhouse, which had formerly been used for new plays, would present Shakespeare. Part of the reason for this change may have been that Papp sensed the impossibility of licking the twofold Beaumont artistic problem outlined above. Part of it certainly was that he had his lines out to new writers and didn't want to subordinate work in which he had looked good. Certainly, too, part of the reason was that he wanted, on his arrival, to set off a bombshell. The new policy meant that Papp could strengthen his affinities with working writers, could avoid imitation-European booby traps, and could run a Shakespeare Festival year round. It was, as theory, ingenious. The policy spelled death, or at least deep discouragement, for any major attempt at a "living museum" of dramatic heritage in New York, but it was congenial to Papp's temperament and it provided the new-broom impact that he wanted.

Prices at Lincoln Center had to be higher than at the Public Theater, where they are still low and where workshop productions are free. Summer Shakespeare in the Park is, of course, still free. And it is possible for anyone under twenty-five or over sixty-five or a full-time student of any age to buy a pass that gets him into plays at Lincoln Center for $3 each. Regular subscription prices go as high as $10 per, not much by Broadway levels but I'm sure discomfiting to Papp.

He began his productions at Lincoln Center in the fall of 1973, as the master of six theaters in New York as well as of various halls and mobile units. The official statement by his press representative said: "Since 1956, the Festival [still the collective name for Papp enterprises] has presented 77 admission-free shows; since 1967 at the Public Theater complex, 59. The first year's budget was $750; the coming five-year projection is $35,848,000." In Papp's own words about himself, he is "in a commanding position to exert an influence on the course of American theater."

His first Lincoln Center production,

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therefore, was in the eye of the spotlight and the storm. The play was *Boom Boom Room* by David Rabe. Papp had previously produced three Rabe plays at the Public Theater, all of which, as it happens, I had disliked in varying degrees. The first two, *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel* and *Sticks and Bones,* were "undergraduate" antiwar plays, with gimmicks, although the second was occasionally somewhat better than that. They were cheered and garlanded, and Papp made extravagant remarks about the young author. The third play, *The Orphan,* was a complicated antiwar allegory that to me simply revealed more nakedly the sophomoric mind that had been there all along; and this time the press demurred—though, naturally, Papp was unshaken. More as if to prove his point about Rabe rather than out of a continuum of faith, Papp chose this new Rabe play to launch the new Lincoln Center. After the premiere there were published reports that Rabe himself thought the play was not ready for production—Rabe said he wasn't sure he had let the play "gestate" long enough—which lends credence to the belief that the production was more a willed act of personal vindication and suzerainty for Papp than of conviction about the readiness and worth of the play.

In the event *Boom Boom Room* turned out to be one more sophomoric exercise, this time about the sexual victimization of a Philadelphia go-go girl who ends up as a topless dancer in New York. Rabe had no more to say on the much-mooted matter of sexism than he had to say about Vietnam. Again, he had thought of one melodramatic central image—this time it was go-go girls hanging in cages above the stage throughout the play—and had filled in the interstices, which happened to be the play itself, with adolescent insights and cliché characters. Moreover, it was clumsily directed by Papp himself, who had stepped in to save the show from the first director, an Off Off Broadway amateur named Julie Bovasso.

Some of the critical response was what Papp must have wanted, but among other reviews (including mine) the most influential notice, by Clive Barnes in the *New York Times,* was heavily adverse. When he learned of Barnes's review, Papp went into the most extreme spasm of outrage in his career. As my opening anecdote shows, he has always been eager to contend with critics; he has always felt free to counterattack. This is neither new with Papp nor unwelcome; why shouldn't the subject of a criticism have the right to respond? But Papp's responses had usually had about them a sublimation of ego injury in a glow of civic outrage. The implicit air had been that to attack his plays meant attacking his policy—theater for the people—and was thus a sort of civic treason. Now, on this particularly tender occasion, when people were watching to see (a) whether he had overextended himself and (b) whether he could beat the Beaumont jinx, the Barnes notice provoked responses, too trivial to detail here, that indicated a change in Papp—a metamorphosis from dauntless guardian of public policy to towering egotist, outraged by dissent. Suffice it to say that, as a result of the brouhaha, a few months later at another Papp opening, there was a reported near-bout of fisticuffs between Papp and another critic, with Barnes figuring in it.

The revved-up aggression—again without long-distance psychoanalysis—is inescapably revealing. It kept revving up: soon after the Rabe opening Papp made a trip to Minneapolis and delivered a speech in which he berated the Guthrie Theater there for its lack of attention to new plays dealing with our lives. Then he came home and, for his next Beaumont production, did *The Au Pair Man,* a feeble allegory about the decline of the British Empire by an Irish writer, Hugh Leonard. This controversion of his own angry pronunciamento is, in its way, a confirmation of afflatus—putting himself above the requirements of his own stated policy, to which he wants to hold others.

As for the following three plays in Papp's first Beaumont season, each of them shows something significant about him. His next was *What the Wine-Sellers Buy* by Ron

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Milner, a black play by a black playwright, and it contained the first bit of deliberate whoring that I have seen in a Papp theater. The entire movement of the play, which was about ghetto life in Detroit, inexorably predicted a grim ending; in the last few minutes, either with Papp's permission or prescription, a happy ending was contrived. This was another facet of a new Papp, with concern for a kind of success he had never wooed before. Presumably he was acting on the Broadway and old-Hollywood line that ninety percent truth is better than none. He had never before rationalized or compromised in this way, to my knowledge. It didn't work now. Barnes of the *Times,* possibly chastened by the rough time Papp had given him on the Rabe play, was only one of the critics who blinked indulgently at the cop-out ending, but the play fizzled.

Next came a revival of Strindberg's *Dance of Death,* played for laughs under A. J. Antoon's direction and wasteful of Robert Shaw's power in the role of the Captain. Aside from questions about the performance itself, Papp's third production, after all the manifestos about new plays, after the excoriation of the Guthrie, was a revival. True, he had said in his proclamation in the Beaumont program: "In some instances a 'great' old play may take the slot of a 'good' new play, but I suspect that this will be the exception, not the rule." The exception turned up pretty early, and again Papp controverted his own dicta with perfect coolness.

The season's last Beaumont production was *Short Eyes,* a new play by Miguel Piñero about a New York house of detention. I thought that, though well directed by Marvin Felix Camillo, it lolled about in what a friend of mine called "the pornography of bad conditions." But what was most interesting about it in terms of Papp's career was the play's provenance. He had produced it first on his main stage downtown at the Public Theater where it had made a hit. So he had moved it uptown to Lincoln Center. This indicated, first, that there was a vacancy in that last "slot," which contradicts his repeated statements in interviews that he has a wealth of new plays on hand that deserve to be produced even if they are not successes. And, second, it underscored the idea of hierarchy, of comparative rank between downtown and the Big Time. Before he had an uptown station, Papp moved some hit shows to Broadway from downtown or from Central Park so that they might pump money into his Off Broadway operations. Now, established uptown, he gave grounds for the suspicion that the emphasis had been reversed. By this move of *Short Eyes* and by hints he dropped later, it seemed that he was beginning to think of his other theaters, either by design or duress, as tryout stops for Lincoln Center.

His three Shakespeare productions at the Newhouse in 1973-74 were *Troilus and Cressida, The Tempest,* and *Macbeth.* The last of these was never officially opened: that is, it played for some weeks to subscribers and other ticket-buyers, but the press was never invited to review it. I saw some of *Macbeth* and thought it not notably worse than the first two; but the important point is that all three of these productions also showed something new in Papp. With the single exception of a *Hamlet* that Papp himself directed in 1967 in apparent imitation of the absurdist Shakespeare that Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz had done in London, his Shakespeare in the previous decade had been populist in intent. All three of these new productions were mannered and elitist, the work of directors whose ambitions were aesthetically pitiful but sheerly aesthetic. Again, an overall sense of "uptown" ambition.

Papp's concurrent season down at the Public Theater was skimpier than in previous years because, one can deduce, of his new uptown activities. The only success was *Short Eyes,* which turned into a life-saving stopgap for the Beaumont. Nevertheless my two most interesting experiences of the Papp year took place downtown.

During the winter of 1973 he presented a musical down there called *More Than You Deserve.* It wanted to be a kind of black-humor inversion of *South Pacific* set

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in Vietnam and was only partially effective; but evidently it was sharp enough to irritate some patriotic folk because there was a bomb scare during the performance I attended. The theater was cleared while the police investigated. Within minutes Papp appeared, summoned from home, tieless and disheveled. He consulted with the police, then mixed with the audience waiting outside, chatting and explaining. When we were permitted to return to the auditorium, Papp spoke briefly, explaining and apologizing and joking, in the role of Your Friendly Neighborhood Theater Manager, and the audience loved it. They knew him, he knew them, and they had all just been through a common experience. I felt I was seeing the best, purely societal side of the man. It was the quintessential Pappian hour, the fruit of twenty years' public service, and I'm glad I was there.

And also at the Public Theater I saw an unsatisfactory production that was, for me, the most rewarding Papp venture of the year, uptown or down: a dramatization of Norman Mailer's second novel, *Barbary Shore*. It was adapted and directed by Jack Gelber, who wrote *The Connection* and has since directed frequently, but I had the feeling that it had been done unconventionally—that it had not begun with a neatly typed script which had then been memorized by actors but that it was a work of exploration. I had the feeling that Gelber had asked Papp for a place and some funds in order to work on a theater version of the novel. Much of the result was valuable. Two of the actors were Estelle Parsons, who could have done the slatternly wife in her sleep but was very wide-awake, and Rip Torn as the Irish radical. Torn's Irish accent was pathetic, but he increased my respect for him as a successful actor trying to grow, to extend his imagination, to make demands on himself that our theater generally neither encourages nor permits. (James Earl Jones, who has grown in good measure through Papp productions, is another example.) I had just been greatly impressed by Torn's performance as an egomaniacal country-music singer in a neglected film called *Payday*, and here again I was impressed with the range that Torn was claiming and in good measure justifying, with Gelber's help. I left feeling happy that there was a theater locus where such work could be done by people already well along in their professional lives.

Any comment on Papp is obviously an interim report. This is underscored by three announcements made while I have been writing this article (early summer 1974), all of them sharply pertinent to it. First, Papp announced that he had gone to Oslo to conclude deals with Liv Ullmann and Ingmar Bergman. Ullmann will play at the Beaumont in the 1974-75 season in *A Doll's House*. The following year Bergman will direct *Rosmersholm* there. Second, Papp announced that within seven months or so he will direct a film version of Rabe's *Boom Boom Room*. Third, he announced that Al Pacino will play in a workshop production, downtown, of Brecht's *Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. "We will evaluate it and then groom it for the Vivian Beaumont," said Papp.

The first item forecasts the trajectory of Papp's future. His new subscription mailer has already told us that his exception-and-rule pronouncement about old and new plays has been discarded, that in the 1974-75 season three new plays and one revival will be presented. (This not only fixes the mixture, it reduces the total by one.) Patently Papp's resolute reliance on new works is modified; patently too he has seized the chance given by his new post to soar out into international wheeling and dealing. I'll be grateful for the chance to see Ullmann's and Bergman's theater work: that's not what is at issue. The point is the change in Papp, as against his past and his predictions, and what it means for his theater. The Ullmann-Bergman arrangement is a managerial coup, not an act of creative imagination.

The film venture, in the light of the Rabe play's history, could be called kinetic camouflage: Papp, by persisting with the script, can show he is undaunted and can

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"vindicate" his questionable judgment about it, he apparently believes. Will he also make films of *The Au Pair Man* and *What the Wine-Sellers Buy?* Will the failure of any Beaumont script mean automatically that Papp will try to redeem it with a show of unshaken faith in another medium?

Also, of course, the announcement highlights something that used to be naturally true of Papp and that is now almost a conscious performance: his protean busyness.

The Pacino announcement is less startling as a coup because Pacino has already played at Lincoln Center (wretchedly, in Williams's *Camino Real*) and, after his *Godfather* success, played Shakespeare with a small company in Boston. But Papp's comment on the matter confirms the hierarchical feeling prompted by the *Short Eyes* switch. Some of his theaters are now more important than others. His heart is in the highlands.

The summer Shakespeare Festival in Central Park was reduced to two plays in 1973 and remains at two in 1974. A faint air of enforced attention, like that of a somewhat bored but faithful husband, begins to hang over the event.

So. So far, for the first part of our conclusion, some readings can be made on what Papp has done. First, quite apart from his institutionalizing of his theater and theaters, he has institutionalized himself. This is most perceptible in respect to his Shakespeare. By now he has pushed so muscularly through so many Shakespeare plays, some of them more than once, a few of them more than twice, that a benign conspectus now prevails about his work, even among some of the few who were critical of individual productions in the past. Mark Twain said that some German words are so long that they have perspective; Papp's Shakespearean record, as such, is now so long that it, too, is taking on perspective. The mere length of that record is evoking a rosy glow. Most of the productions, as I have seen them, have been inadequate and some of them have been dreadful. But Papp has built his very endurance into a species of critical stature, so that his new Shakespeare productions, even when they are disliked, are seen as steps in a grand saga.

To see Papp more clearly—in this one aspect of Shakespearean institution—compare him with a predecessor. Something over a century ago in London an actor-manager named Samuel Phelps took over a disreputable theater, the Sadler's Wells, in Islington, an outlying lower-class district. "Legitimate" drama, which meant Shakespeare and the other classics, had become the figurative property of the upper classes who cared little about it, attended the major central theaters very little, and were a poor audience when they came. Qualitatively, they were just the sort of audience Papp resents and despises. Phelps made a bet on the clerks and workingmen of Islington, and between 1844 and 1862 he produced thirty-one Shakespeare plays (along with many others). Many visitors to Sadler's Wells commented on the warm feeling of community between stage and pit, the audience's sense that this was *their* theater and the actors' sense that they were working for *their* audience. This feeling of relation is something that in itself Papp can claim, but there is a decisive difference between him and Phelps. During Phelps's management of Sadler's Wells, that theater became famous throughout Britain and Europe for its high and innovative quality of production. The German novelist Theodor Fontane visited Sadler's Wells six times between 1855 and 1857 and wrote about the productions for a German journal. In the summer of 1859 Phelps took his company, with their scenery, on a German tour. The enthusiastic critical reception, with its emphasis on Sadler's Wells ensemble playing and production—a revolutionary concept then—greatly influenced the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. The duke's principal interest was his court theater, and the Saxe-Meiningen players are generally credited with initiating the very idea of "directed" productions as we know them today, in their work from 1874 to 1890; but Sadler's Wells

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greatly influenced the duke. Thus, besides the community value of Phelps's theater, it had high artistic stature, which in turn had lasting influence. For all Papp's twenty years of Shakespeare, no comparable claim could remotely be made for his work. He has mixed his casts and given newcomers opportunities, but the level of work has been low and the identifiable artistic tone, as against social utility, has been nonexistent. There have simply been a lot of productions. (And they have been free. But even that is, strictly speaking, not an innovation. In the 1930s I used to see Shakespearean and other plays at the Free Theater run by Butler Davenport in a converted brownstone on East 27th Street.)

Apart from his status as institution, Papp has also made a mark as a kind of theater savior-cum-apostle. In this regard, compare him with Jerzy Grotowski, the leader of the Polish Laboratory Theater. I don't for a split second equate the two men as intellectuals or artists, still there is a relation between them. Grotowski has said explicitly that the prime purpose of his work is to find reasons for the theater to continue to exist, to find its irreducible and irreplaceable essence. Papp, in his way, has been engaged in a twenty-year campaign to make the theater "important," available, necessary. Grotowski's way has been through art, profound and seminal. Papp's way has been through sheer activity and through hospitality—to theater workers and an altering audience. In religious analogy, it's the difference between Saint John of the Cross and Billy Graham.

Admittedly it's arbitrary of me to compare Papp with Phelps and Grotowski, but is there an apt comparison that would do better for him? None that I can think of. And, quite precisely, that leads to the crux of the matter.

If we disregard the big commercial managements as irrelevant to our discussion, then Papp is the only person who has made a considerable mark in the theater—in any American or European theater that I have seen or read about—without extraordinary talent, without exemplary taste, without an aesthetic imperative, without intellectual distinction. If I run through all the names that come to mind—Barker and Copeau and Reinhardt, Baylis and Strehler and Lady Gregory, the directorates of the Provincetown Players and the first Washington Square Players, of the Edwardian and latter-day Royal Court—a random list, very extensible—I can find no one who has had so great an effect on the theater of his time as Papp, for whose talent and taste I have so little respect.

Perhaps it is this very attribute, this consummate *lack* of attributes, that makes him a man for our season. I mean this not cynically but clinically. Papp began from a base of radical political convictions and moved into a time when such convictions became less germane to the country and to him but left him with undiminished social concerns. In this new depoliticized society, with his social dynamics, with an inheritance of veneration for culture and especially for people's culture, he found a happy conjuncture: he met the accelerated growth of an aesthetic view founded on (in the traditional sense, anyway) anti-aesthetics, the arrival of pop art, of junk art, of pop 1960s nonpolitical political revolution, a general turbulence not only anti-intellectual in tenor but revisionist of the belief that art requires cultivation in both the maker and the appreciator, a new view holding that extraordinary talent and extraordinary discrimination are divisive, inhibiting, and exclusive. (I heard the word "fascist" used at public meetings in the 1960s against those who believe that art depends on talent and taste.) In short, it was the perfect atmosphere for a man whose past had given him communal and cultural hungers, whose ego gave him tremendous itches, but whose composition provided minimal artistic gifts. His personality and makeup have fitted the times so well that he has become a figure of major stature in an art without one single achievement of major stature in that art.

From all this it could be argued that Papp was destined for Lincoln Center. That Center, as Robert Brustein once remarked, is the sort of thing America pro-

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duces instead of culture. Papp is what America has produced, in the same period, instead of a great creator. What Lincoln Center theater needs, at almost any figurative price, is success; and that is what Papp has the most of, in the theater.

He is, conjecturally, becoming an archetypal success story: the revolutionary youth whose devotion to social ideals takes him up the ladder as surely as another man's devotion to gain but who can't help feeling some guilt at his success. The guilt is then transformed into hypersensitivity and aggression—and into power-wielding as luxurious as that of the grossest materialist.

This leads to one last paradox. On the one hand he feels supreme, world-embracing. (I await announcement of the acquisition of Papp's private jet to help him consummate deals here and abroad—all for our cultural sake, of course.) On the other hand, he begins consciously to compromise in order to maintain supremacy. (What sins that man is willing to take on himself—for our sake.)

Still, if these conjectures about Papp are valid, as I think they are, it's undeniable that he has made the theater throb and bustle. And he has opened doors for young people. Ironically, it may turn out that the best contribution of his ego has been in helping others to contribute. In any event, heaven knows, it is better to have a Papp dominant than a Merrick, or better than having unruffled blandness.

To balance our gratitude, we can remember a fact of history. In the theater's worst moments, the audience rules; in its best moments, the audience still rules but good artists induce it to rule differently. The great theater people have extended the theater's power to affect the audience's *imaginative resource*. Papp, at his best, confuses imagination with information; at his best and his worst, he aims straight for the center of the audience's resource as it now is, and hugs it.

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POEMS

LAWRENCE RAAB

Dartmoor

The air
is a tangle of lines
dragging the moor

Everything bows
before it bends beneath
the stilled weight of wind

which has counted
all the crossed and tilted slates
in all the wet yards of England
picked through each bone
and left unsatisfied

and waited
calling to its own
choosing its time

as our voices hang and fall
discarded cracked open
empty

as if nothing would be enough

the air grows colder the wind
retreats inside it
carrying its few broken words

and the scars
and the white hooks

scratching at the stone

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The Assassin's Fatal Error

When in doubt have a man come
through a door with a gun in his hand.
—Raymond Chandler

He comes through the door,
the big gun in his fist. He says,
"Nobody's going anywhere."
Nobody was, nobody's
even here, except
me and this bottle of scotch,
and I'm used to waiting.

He tells me to explain
about the pearls, because he knows
ways to make me tell. However,
I know nothing about them,
nothing about Mr. R. or The Big Man,
and nothing about Oregon where I
have never lived at any time in my life.

Perhaps I'm lying, but he's convinced,
although he will shoot me anyway,
which I understand.

Perhaps I say, "What kept you?"
Probably I just finish the scotch,
which is third-rate but effective.

Mine, you understand, has been
a temporary disguise, which may or may not
be explained at a later time.
Its importance to the story

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lies in the discovery of the body
by the detective, tomorrow.

I also turn up three chapters from the end
as a Doctor, where I can be trusted
even less than now, when I still have
this death to get through.

"There must be connections,"
I tell him. "There always are.
And it's smart to leave
the witness silent, get the job over
and get out of town."

The gun wanders around the room.
"Listen," I tell him. "Anything
can happen. But this could be
the fatal error. You don't know
any more than I do."

The long tube of the silencer turns toward me.
I consider the finger on the trigger,
the sound like somebody coughing
upstairs in an old building,
and now the single bullet
suspended in the air between us.

You could ask: But what did I expect?
And I would have to say: Only this.
Nothing but this.

✪ LAWRENCE RAAB is working on a second volume of poems tentatively titled *The Collector of Cold Weather.* His first collection, *Mysteries of the Horizon,* was reissued in paperback by Doubleday in the spring of 1974.

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The Way We Live Now

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

In science generally, to solve one set of problems may be to create or discover a whole new set, and of no science, of no art essentially involved with science, is this more true than of medicine, if only because of its social impact—increase of life expectancy at birth, for example, or the population explosion. Both society as a whole and every member of it have been powerfully affected by medical progress, and the intensity of our gratitude to medicine for eliminating or controlling so many kinds of suffering is an indication of its power. But we are also selfish: we want more to be grateful for. *You have done so much for us: now do the rest.*

A natural enough cry, but also a dangerous invitation. Not the least of the reasons for the medical profession's conservatism, at any rate in the United States, is its resistance to the pressure, whether spoken or implicit, to do more than it can or should. The success of medical science has given doctors great authority, and some of them are personally authoritative not only in the good sense of the word but also in the bad sense of being dictatorial; yet the profession as a social force is actively and honorably refusing to tyrannize.

My intention in this essay is to look at three large medico-social concerns that exist chiefly or solely because of advances in medical science and that implicate us all. The first, which gives its title to this essay, is an aspect of the treatment and prevention of degenerative diseases. Over half of the deaths in this country at present result from cardiovascular ailments, mostly degenerative in nature. This is not attributable to aging as such but to the way of life that precedes and accompanies aging; the part I am looking at here has to do with ailments that are the consequences of the way we live now and of which death by heart attack is the best-known but by no means the only important form. A literary man, I became interested in this general problem for personal reasons: I had back trouble, perhaps the commonest degenerative complaint among adults who are not yet old, and I was lucky enough to find a healer doing good and innovative work in an area in which medicine has made relatively slow progress. It is simply as a citizen that I come to the other two main concerns of this essay: nationalized universal health care and the deep yearning for medical totalitarianism.

Before I get to the main subjects, I should mention another consequence of medical progress that is necessarily involved with all the others. This is the enormous increase in the responsibility not only of the profession to society but of each physician to his patients. It is easy enough for us laymen to discuss the pros and cons of such medically created social issues as sterilization or dialysis or psychosurgery; but, to a degree that most of us perhaps do not appreciate, constantly and ever-increasingly, each individual physician is on the moral firing line: "What should *I* do with *this* patient *now*?"

Two examples.

Conventionally, doctors are trained to

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT is in the process of finishing a long novel set in Byzantium. His last book of essays is *Conversions*.

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deal with and look for crises. When a patient presents his symptom, the doctor must try to diagnose what disorder produced it—much of the time a routine matter since there is no real crisis. In the past, there was usually no way for the doctor to know whether this symptom had been caused by a grave malady or, if he did know, there was nothing for him to do about it. But medical science has identified more and more diseases and developed more and more cures, and patients have been encouraged to bring their symptoms to the doctor earlier and earlier, when he has greatest difficulty in diagnosing them accurately—the greater the crisis, the more obvious it is what malady he is dealing with and what he can do about it. As a result, both his uncertainty and his responsibility for a grave error have been magnified. Any profession should consider itself in good shape if the bulk of its members are competent and conscientious, if their mistakes are honest; but good doctors are sometimes reviled and may even reproach themselves for failing to perform according to standards that could be met only by a genius who never had an off day.

A middle-aged working woman, divorced, her son a soldier in Vietnam and her daughter mentally defective, with no brother or sister alive, is discovered to have cancer of a kind that causes little pain, cannot be cured, and will kill her within a couple of years. She should be able to work a good deal of that time, perhaps most of it. However, she is obsessed by the black death-spots appearing on her skin and suffers extreme pain. She believes that the pain is caused by the cancer; the doctor tells her that it is caused by her inability to handle the knowledge that she is going to die, but she cannot hear that. Her agony is unrelenting and incapacitates her; out of her mind, abject, she does not even wish for death, but gives herself over to her pain. Not many generations ago, her doctor could only have let nature take its course. Euthanasia, though always possible theoretically, would probably not have been present in his mind as a serious alternative until well into the nineteenth century. But now science presents him with an array of horrors among which he must choose. Doing nothing is not an evasion but one of the positive choices. Killing her is one. Another, at once humane and dreadful, is a lobotomy; it will relieve her of the torment, will enable her to function for several months more and to die as unwretchedly as possible. But who is to help the doctor make his decision? She cannot in her present condition, out of her mind and desolate of family. The profession has its guidelines, and society its opinions in the form of laws. But finally, there the doctor stands, with godlike power in his hands, alone with his conscience.

Little wonder the medical profession is not enthusiastic about taking on a vast new set of emotional and social ailments beyond a physician's control—what Hippocrates twenty-five hundred years ago identified as the "maladies of the way of living." Treatment for them is less reliable than for the "maladies of the body" and is largely still in the experimental stage; they are usually complex, often obscure in origin, and their prevention reaches far beyond the strictly medical into the very fabric of society. Yet medicine's successes have put it in a position where it must face this challenge—perhaps the greatest one of all.

II

If ever a verb needed both subject and object, that verb is "attack." Attack is something one does to a foe. The language of illness is full of foes, most of them not visible to the naked eye. "She had an attack of pneumonia"; vaguely, we think of her as having been invaded by germs. "She had an attack of arthritis in her hip"; even more vaguely, we think of arthritis as an enemy looking for her weak joint and seizing her there. ("She had a seizure." What seized her? An evil spirit in the old days; these days it is more likely to be a descriptive noun —epilepsy, depression, arthritis.) But when "He died in his sleep of a heart attack," idiom has given up. Not "Such and so at-

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tacked him"; not "He was attacked by a heart disease"; not even "He was attacked." "He had a heart attack." And language doesn't suggest the faintest idea of what attacked him.

One afternoon in 1956 I was in the living room tying a shoelace when suddenly it was as though I had been hit across the small of the back with a fence post. For some reason, language doesn't let me have a "back attack." In those days, my back had "gone out," or I had had a sacroiliac slip"; nowadays my back would have "gone into spasm." I have never felt more attacked in my life. But my body had not been invaded by so much as a filterable virus, and back attack, which only hurts or cripples, has even less prestige than heart attack, which at least can kill you. What attacked me? There was absolutely nothing to point the finger at outside myself. What kind of creature attacks himself from behind? Not me.

Every year or so for fourteen more years I did it again. Why? How to keep from doing it any more? I just had a "bad back"; maybe that's all there was to be said. I had back trouble the way my grandfather had had lumbago. (Too bad we don't have lumbago any longer. Lumbago is a word you can get some disgust into, complain with.) It was just a condition of life, like having colds or allergies.

The doctors weren't much help.

Aspirin. Learn to live with it. Self-destructive impulses. Board under the mattress.

"You know what's wrong with you, don't you? You're beginning to wear out."

If it hurts don't do it. Muscle relaxant. Exercise. A corset.

"It all goes back," said an old geezer flexing a plastic model of the spine, "to man's mistake in deciding to walk on two legs when he was designed for walking on all four."

Death instinct. Maybe it's a disc and we'll have to operate. Take it easy. All in your mind.

The hell it's all in my mind! That pain is in my back! And I *know* I don't want it, I didn't put it there, I didn't attack myself. —The you that you know didn't, but what about the unknown you?—So that's your game, is it? Listen, you stay out of my unconscious, and I'll stay out of yours. Accusing me of pulling sneak attacks on myself!

Meanwhile, in another part of the battlefield, I don't know who was winning, but I know damned well who was losing—my back. Then, in the summer of 1970, I whammed myself across the small of my back with a telephone pole and went down for a count of ten days.

In 1930, for every 100 American women over the age of 65, there were 101 men. In 1950, for every 100 women over 65, there were 90 men. In 1970, 72 men. I wasn't 65 yet, but I was a sedentary, white, one hundred percent American male two years into his guerrilla decade, the fifties. I was already winged; I'd have to take drastic action if I was to get through to 65 alive. But what was I to do? If I didn't find something soon, the fear that was making me eager to act would instead permeate me; I'd be drenched with it, sodden.

In 1956 I had been able to find no one—and I looked hard in upstate New York, in New York City, in Berkeley—who knew how to help me in the way that would have counted most, even if I had been ready and willing to accept that help. But by 1970 I had changed for the better in this respect and so had a few healers, and I was lucky enough to live in a city where a couple of them practice. (By healers I mean both licensed physicians and other paramedicals rather than "faith healers," those who would heal by faith alone.)

My wife got me to a physician with some unorthodox views. He had gone through psychoanalysis a decade before and had come out of it resolved to do most of his therapeutic cutting with words thereafter, saving the knife for Thanksgiving turkeys. He didn't have to cut into me much; I had already figured out that the strains that triggered my back into spasm were as often emotional as physical. So he sent me to a

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healer who had devised a program for people like me (and I am legion). Not the sort of healer who does things to you, but the sort who helps you heal yourself. For the purpose of this essay, his name is Baum.

In the middle of the journey of this life, Baum began to have cardiovascular symptoms. His three brothers had died of heart attacks, and he took the hint. He resolved to do something about it—the sort of resolution everyone is familiar with, only he meant it. This was about the time I had had my first back attack, and just as the doctors had not known what to do about most kinds of back trouble, they had not known what to do about heart attacks, not really. He had been trained in psychology and physical education; he was widely acquainted and knew where to begin looking.

But the more he learned about disorders of the heart, the more he found himself looking at the whole person—body and mind, social being and individual, emotions and chemicals, will-not and ought-not and can-not and dare-not, all inextricably interconnected. He saw the heart attack as one symptom of a complex that also produces many other symptoms, among them stomach ulcers and bad backs. He tried various therapeutic approaches. Not being an M.D. was one handicap to him, not having research funds was another, and so was trying out a radically unorthodox method of therapy. He did not give up. Finally, after much study, experiment, and consultation, he developed a method of healing which he applied successfully to himself, against the dominant medical opinion in the United States at the time, and restored his own heart to vigorous health. Since then, he has been applying his method to people with a variety of ailments, including physicians with heart trouble, parkinsonians, injured workers the orthopedists have given up on, the partially paralyzed, and lots of people whose backs and necks have been attacked—and with so many successes that he has a long waiting list of referrals. He has told me that he works under the authority of a "farsighted" medical advisory board, which includes physicians from many different specialties, and that he accepts only people who are referred by their physicians. But essentially he does his work alone, for he must be careful. Like many forms of therapy, his program involves serious risks: not enough strenuous exercise and you won't get well, too much and you're in trouble, perhaps even dead.

What mattered, and still matters, to me most about what I know of his method was something he said in the first interview: the cause of my trouble was (the formula is mine) the way we live now. I did not think highly of the way we live now, which was pretty much the way I was living; but explanations for the gap between that and my backaches were familiar and discouraging, like a priest's telling a drunkard he drinks too much because of original sin. Chugalug to Adam and Eve, old chum, pour me another. I knew well enough that, though medical progress has marvelously got rid of or controlled one disease after another, still all over the world those who have benefited from that progress are profoundly discontented with the way they live; they are far less disease-ridden, but it is dubious how much healthier they are, considering how new modes of unhealth keep springing up in, and old ones keep adapting themselves to, areas vacated by the ailments now abolished or controlled. But what about *my back*?

So then Baum filled in the gap with such phrases as "general condition," "a healthy muscle (beginning with the heart) is a well-used muscle," "self-image," "corrective exercise and patterning programs," "build up bodily resistance to both emotional and physical assaults," "overload," "recovery time," "break the tension pattern." He did not use the word "psychosomatic." Among intellectuals at least, psychosomatic has become septic with obscure blame, the equivalent of "it's all in your mind, it's not real"; to them, to me, heart attacks and back spasms are something like syphilis to a Methodist—sin revealed.

The more Baum filled in the gap his words had originally created, the more I

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was convinced he was onto something good, but I doubted him when he said he had developed a physical fitness program that would help me overcome the lumbar consequences of my living the way we live now. Absolution by blame-free calisthenics? Psychosomatic nonsense! Still, for several reasons, I decided to give his method a try.

I was tired of palliatives and shrugs; no-one else had ever promised me a real cure.

Our language has no proper name for my ailments, even though more than half of all Americans over thirty are bothered by back trouble to some degree, and an ailment uncontained by words can sneakily infiltrate the soul as a rightly named one cannot—though a wrongly named one, especially a wrongly named mental trouble, can lock you in for life. He did not promise to shoot down my enemy with magic bullets (one tablet four times a day for six weeks), which I would have grabbed at but would not have believed in, not for this ailment; nor did he clobber me with that supernatural admonition *you must change your life*—supernatural, unimaginable, true, unmanageable. Instead he said, "I have the utmost respect for my body, and I don't let it get away with a thing." I had not been treating my body with respectful authority, and it had been cheating on me like crazy. Right. And his metaphor for my disorder was premechanical, as I was. He did not want to take me apart to see what made me tick, but to train me to get back in the saddle, take the reins in my hands, and go. It sounded worth trying at least, so I tried it and it worked. What he said would happen did happen, and more too.

Two other matters increased my trust in him—and trust is essential in any therapy of the word, as most therapy is to some degree and as his is inextricably. The first was his resolve to take as long as need be to help you; an important part of his method is to get you to change some of your habits, which takes more time than most doctors are willing to, or can, apportion to you, or more than you may be able to afford. The other was the firm clarity of the rules he had established and worked by, especially his answering all your questions, silly or serious, insignificant or meaningful, and his encouraging you to ask them.

Here, in summary, is what he has told me of his method. He recognizes the inseparable totality of body and mind and bases his therapeutic approach upon the principle of complementarity. He has found that many degenerative health problems can be helped and healed, and can be prevented, by getting those two basic complementary variables, the physical and the emotional, into a workable balance—a workable balance that must be maintained throughout life. How? "By penetrating and desensitizing the harmful barriers that are causing the problems, and by building up the organ systems of the body to a workable level." Some of the tools he uses, in addition to those I have already mentioned, are: a cardiovascular-pulmonary conditioning program performed to the beat of popular music (this program has received praise from many medical authorities); a corrective daily living program involving nutrition, health habits, relationships, work, play; programs for the breaking of regenerative feedback cycles and the reduction of physical and emotional tensions; and the use of effective community resources when needed. In sum, he teaches underlying principles, concepts, and working tools that can be applied to most situations that might come up: overload, recovery, relaxation, rhythm, balance, action, alignment, movement, warm-up, tapering off, resistance, repetition, pacing, dosage; perhaps most important, he teaches how fears and anxieties can bring on pain and disability, and how to prevent tension from building up to harmful levels, but if it does, how to handle it.

III

So long as I didn't know that I didn't know what I was talking about, I was gung-ho for socialized medicine. Health care is too fundamental a human good to be withheld from anyone just because of lack of money. How can society give free health care to a convicted murderer and

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not to the poor and unfortunate? As for what health is, the statement of the World Health Organization (WHO) formulates a boundless, uninspected ideal that appealed to my benevolent vagueness: a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

But now health care in the United States is on its way to becoming more or less nationalized—as it has been, is being, and will be nationalized in all advanced countries. So we should think hard about what it ought to and can actually turn into; like any important issue that affects us all, education for example, it ought not to be left to experts alone. Acting on this impulse, I have read a good bit and talked with several doctors and professors of medicine; I have attended a seminar on extended health care; I have had four years of observing a gifted healer and talking with him about his method; I have looked into the New York State Workmen's Compensation, which has had fifty years of experience with bureaucratically supervised health care, into health insurance programs and policies, and into vocational rehabilitation. After all this, I am still in favor of freely available health care for everyone. To be against it is rather like being against love, peace, civil liberties, or honest government. But I still do not fancy it as a mighty dissolver of injustices and solver of problems, as I once sort of did. Its overall social benefit will be real, though less than I had imagined, and the harm it will generate threatens to be considerable.

At least I know now that I don't know, which was as far as Socrates said he'd got. So maybe I have a few opinions worth considering.

That WHO proposition has to go. Reflect on the limitless implications of actually believing in it. First, let's rid the world of evil ("disease or infirmity"); then let's fill it with good ("complete physical, mental, and social well-being"). Offhand, you might think any notion which is that pretty and that remote from reality must be harmless. Why else would assembled representatives of the nations of the world agree to it with scarcely a belch? But there are people who believe universal happiness is attainable in this world, and official sanction of a paradisal ideal like this one not only feeds their fantasies but encourages them to take action. Once started, where will they stop of their own accord?

Moreover, medicine partakes of the decidedly expansionist tendencies common to the sciences concerned with human behavior, whether social, psychological, or physical. Consider a recent medical acquisition analogous to the United States's gradual absorption of Puerto Rico. In 1852 the word "alcoholism" was coined to describe the pathological consequences of alcohol addiction. The man who drank was still a drunkard, a man who chose to do wrong. But gradually alcoholism moved in on drunkards, the way "mental illness" moved in on the mad. In the early 1970s in the United States, by fiat of the American Medical Association, the armed forces, and the Civil Service, alcoholism officially became a disease—not a sickness of the will, which is an ancient and useful metaphor, but a true disease like cholera or arthritis, one that has no intrinsic and mysterious connection with the conscience, the self.

Under WHO auspices, every aspect of human life, every single one whatsoever, would become subject to health arrangements: a benevolent invitation to totalitarianism. For example, what is the state to do with people who keep on getting sick or refuse to get well? Does not your health become your patriotic duty? Imagine the bind an enlightened totalitarianism puts a drunkard in. If alcoholism is a disease, no censure attaches to you for having it. But getting it in the first place, when you didn't have to, is antisocial behavior, and not curing yourself of it or not letting the state's agents cure you and keep you cured makes you an enemy of the state. A big campaign against alcoholism is shaping up in this country, and one is going full blast in the USSR. The Russians are probably doing better at it than we, but I hope we never go whole hog and get the police

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in on "health" as they do (see *Cancer Ward*). Myself, I'd rather be a weak sinner of a drunkard with a body and soul to abuse if I wish, than a sick criminal of an alcoholic upon whom bureaucrats, medicos, and police can enforce virtue for the good of the state. I believe that, though it is bad for an affluent nation to withhold the opportunity for health care from its citizens, it is even worse for it to force them to be virtuous in the name of health. It may very well be sinful of me to evade my problems by stupefying myself with liquor, but this sin is no business of society's until I thrust it upon others. I should be punished if I knowingly spread an infectious disease; but I'm damned well going to get as drunk as I please as often as I please, and you'd better not throw me in the clink till I disturb the peace, and to hell with alcoholism.

Realized, the WHO dream of total health would turn the world not into a garden of earthly delights but into a superhospital run by medical dictators, every nurse a spy on you for your own good.

How about workmen's compensation?

The goal of workmen's compensation is easily stated: "Get injured workers back to work." A modest goal. Indeed, compared to the WHO's, it is downright humble. But the longer I think about it, the more I see it as the likeliest model for one of the three supreme goals of nationalized health care (the other two being the prevention of illness through research and public health services, and extensive care for the newborn, the disabled, and the aged). "Get the sick and injured back into action." For workers, this means back on the job. For students, back to school. For housewives and mothers, back to running their homes. And that is as much as society undertakes to deliver in the way of free, universal health care. Beyond that, you're on your own.

Consider some of the advantages of this limited goal. It is simple enough for everybody to understand, especially the poor, the ignorant, the stupid, the cowed, those whose need is most desperate. Society can afford it; that is to say, like any form of equalizing, it takes from the haves and gives to the have-nots, and probably this goal represents about as much as the powerful American rich will consent to have taken from them by taxation for the health of the poor (which is the usual meaning of the euphemism "Society can afford it"). It leaves the rich their medical privileges, such as cosmetic surgery, psychoanalysis, orthodontia, and access to fashionably expensive doctors and treatments, the sort of privileges the powerful never give up. (Who do you suppose get acupunctuated better, a Tibetan yak-herd or Chairman Mao? For the good of the state of course.) This goal can be achieved without a drastic overhaul of present medical practices; in any profession, important changes in methods should be generated within the profession, not be imposed by the state. It does not make doctors employees of the state but hires their services, and it leaves patients free to choose their doctors. It provides guidelines by which the state (that is, the lawmakers and the health bureaucrats) can decide what to treat or leave untreated and when to quit paying for treatment. It doesn't false-promise you either virtue or happiness or wholeness, either to make your life worth living or to free you from anxiety. Mainly it offers to help you, if you want and can use the help, get back to playing whatever role in life you and luck and necessity have got you into, or to train you for a better fitting role.

But this isn't enough! Think of all the unhappiness this scheme leaves untouched! True, it isn't total justice. It isn't total anything else either, and that is a strong point in its favor. Unfortunately, it is also messy and clumsy. But if we are not to have health totalitarianism, we must say *this far and no farther,* draw a line, set limits, however arbitrary some of those limits must be, however confusing.

Most Americans will not be greatly pleased by universal free medical care on the workmen's compensation model. But the poor will be. They will have a better

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chance of living out their full life-spans, they won't have nearly so many rotten teeth and cleft palates, they will not spend so much of their lives heavy with hopeless dread. And they are many. And their pain is bitter.

Nationalized health care alleviates some of the profound woes of existence, mostly for the poor, but it substitutes for those great troubles such lesser ones as grievance-collecting, complaining, appealing, finagling, cheating. In at least one important respect, this is no improvement, for the huge existential troubles are much less dirty than the smaller moral ones. Nevertheless, there is a commandment, at once religious and humanist, to which we cannot be indifferent even when we break it, even when it conflicts with the other imperatives: if your neighbor is suffering and you have the power to help him, you must help him. But, overall, the sum of human happiness, at least in America, is not likely to be added to as much as one would hope by "national health insurance," as it is now being called, quite misleadingly. There can be a certain dignity to an affliction for which no one is to blame, whereas there is no dignity whatever in cheating or in the *what's in it for me*? sort of complaining. The limited way of exempting the poor from much needless suffering will yield gratitude, of course, in addition to the obvious benefits; but it is also likely to release a plague of discontent and litigation.

Why this gloom? Three main reasons: the doctor, the bureaucrat, the patient.

IV

The doctor.

It is not part of my intention, as it is far from my competence, to chastise the medical profession. Here I simply assume as valid, and then speculate out from, the overdependence on technology in health care in America as I have learned about it from my own observation, from talking with some doctors whom I trust, and from reading some books and articles that strike me as intelligent.

Doctors prescribe far more medicines than are required or even safe, all the way from aspirin through penicillin to drugs that stain the soul. A formidable number of operations are of dubious necessity and/or value; some are almost certainly unnecessary or too extensive, considering the available, though less decisive, less clean-cut, alternatives. In this as in other areas of therapy where the doctor has a choice, trust in the power of the word seems to be in inverse ratio to trust in the power of the knife. Medical schools tend to train a student to think of himself as a highly refined clinical technician treating a problem, more than as *a person who* is a healer treating *a person who* has a problem. (It should be said that many medical educators are aware of this tendency and are trying to change this way of teaching, primarily by the force of example.)

Why this wholesale technologizing of what used to be favorably called the art of healing?

The obvious reasons are general and pragmatic. Generally, America, like every other advanced society, believes in technology. Of the specific ingredients that make the way we live now unique to us, only our wealth is as important as this faith. How could doctors not be involved in technology too? Pragmatically, doctors use it in some areas where it has no business or where its efficacy is doubtful because in the many areas where it works, it works better than anything else; more predictably, it can be counted on. Polio, puerperal fever, goiter, detached retina, impacted wisdom tooth, gallstones are only a few of the very long list of ills we do not have, need not have, or can tolerate now which, save for medical technology, would make us miserable or kill us. Moreover, to some extent, such technologizing relieves doctors from worrying about or hardening their hearts to the often tremendously important, delicate relationship of doctor and patient. The surgeon cutting a tumor out of a brain must deal impersonally with the technical problems at hand and must not concern himself in any immediate way with the mysterious person asleep in that brain.

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Insulin prescribed by a Jewish doctor does its job as well on a Panther as on a Klansman, one of the few things all three are likely to agree on.

The very success of technology in controlling so many medical problems has created or exacerbated others—magic. "If you take these pills I am giving you, your wart will vanish." Granted a correct diagnosis, pill-giving may be as rational an act as the physician can perform, but emotionally, for both him and the patient, there is some magic in it too. Emotionally among us, a physical disorder that is susceptible to technological therapy seems more rational and therefore more *real* than a disorder that can be treated, if at all, only with the therapy of words. "It's all in your mind" makes the patient shrink in a way that "This pill will fix you up" does not. "I hurt. The doctor can't find a physical cause for my pain, so it must be mental. The pain is real, but the cause is irrational, mysterious, unreal. I must be crazy. Magic will cure me."

The technology wizards, who clearly have the upper hand, are vigorously moving in on purely mental disorders. Take psychosurgery. Myself, I would as soon have my heart trouble terminated by having my heart cut out as my "mental illness" terminated by a lobotomy; I would rather be a corpse than a speaking vegetable—at least I think I would, I who am not now, never have been, and hope never to be obliged to make that choice for myself or for anyone else.

If psychiatry, or the therapy of the word, is having a rough time against technology's superior, because more *real*, firepower, even worse off is body-soul healing. Being of neither party but sharing of both, it has had to go guerrilla, to infiltrate, ambush, proselytize—with no stunning successes, to be sure, but with a steady flow of quiet conversions. These conversions are of a sort most annoying to technology, for the converts do not wish to destroy it (technology could laugh that off easily enough) but to absorb it, to take out of it the magic that keeps people in awe of it and make it our tool again, so we can get back into the saddle and take control.

The schism between thing-therapy and word-therapy is unfortunate in itself, but it also entails a whole new problem. In the clearing made by technology's elimination of a great many physical ailments, there have come to flourish as never before, not flowers of joyous health as progress promised, but powerful new ailments: they are the symptoms of neither a psychosis nor a true physical disease and they yield to the magic of neither words nor technology. Take heart attacks. What can soul-smiths do about them? Not much. What can anatomy-mechanics do? Repair work: pills, open-heart surgery, transplants. As for the main thing, prevention, there is sound advice: relax, stop smoking, cut down on cholesterol, jog. But a lot of good such advice accomplishes when it is scattered around by prime exponents of the way we live now, the doctors, so very many of whom, though they may be devoted, self-sacrificing healers, are also overworked, underexercised, money-making technophiles.

It's time to bring body and soul together again.

The bureaucrat.

He won't be much help in effecting this coming together. On the contrary. A bureaucrat is happy to authorize payment for your false teeth, hysterectomy, meningitis, hemorrhoids, trench mouth, erysipelas, epilepsy, or mumps, because it's pretty clear what is wrong and what can or can't be done about it. For the same reason, he'll tell you to take care of your own hair transplant, acne, smoker's cough, impotence or frigidity, hangover, and also, up to a point (what point?), your obesity, crooked teeth, ingrown toenails, paranoia, depressions, varicose veins, colds, and sore throats. But what is he to do about the multifarious pathological conditions with obscure origins and with unconventional or inadequate or uncertain treatments—heart attack, asthma, stiff neck, allergy to house dust, eczema, migraine, listless-

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ness, back spasm, claustrophobia, sciatica? He must press doctors for yes-no answers to questions many of which cannot be answered yes or no. He must ask, "She's getting better, so how much disability is her pulled tendon worth this week? Seventy-five percent? Fifty percent?" "Well," says the doctor, "she can't go back to the punch press yet, but she can take care of the kids when they come home from school, and she can make supper. Her sister does the shopping for her and cleans the house." "Forty percent."

Health bureaucrats under limited universal health care must draw lines which irritate doctors, which patients resent for being there at all, and about the rightness of which the bureaucrats themselves are often unsure. So the bureaucrats inevitably push for quantifiable health care—this even though humanly they know better. They must cut and dry that which is sprawling and confused and tumid with huge emotions. In a family court, lawyer, counselor, and judge must sometimes, in order that justice may be served, insert themselves where no one belongs, between parent and child, husband and wife; similarly, the medical bureaucrat cannot help inserting himself between doctor and patient. By withholding payment, he can press, almost force, doctor or patient or both to behave as they would not otherwise have behaved, and such pressure encourages malingering, falsification of reports, dangerous shortcuts; for when there is a dispute between doctor and patient or between doctor and patient on one side and bureaucrat on the other about what is necessary for the welfare of the patient, the bureaucrat has the upper hand so long as the other two let him pay.

With an illness that is physical and reasonably well defined, for example, a broken leg or appendicitis terminating in an appendectomy, this third-person interference is negligible. But I did not argue when my health insurance company refused to pay for physical therapy treatments: Baum's method had not yet fully established itself in the eyes of the profession; the cause of my ailment was ill defined (can you imagine "the way we live now" ever standing up in court against a good staph infection?); and there was no unarguable way to determine when I was well again, especially since my back trouble had never kept me off the job for long. A third-person hassle over whether and what and how much would have become a malignant part of the way I live, for from hassle to anxiety to tension to back muscles (as to heart or to stomach), there is a crooked and obscure but strong connection. Not just a mind-to-body connection, as "psychosomatic" would lead you to suppose, but, as wise physicians have long known and as I had to learn by doing, body-to-mind as well.

A truck driver who does not like his job much (as very many people don't) has pretty well recovered from his neck injury but wants to stay at home and putter around the garden. But he does not say, "I don't want to go back to work"; he says, "I'm not well enough to." His doctor says he probably could do his job, with considerable stress, but that it would surely be better for him to stay home a while longer and maybe go to vocational rehabilitation for training for a different job. "No," says the bureaucrat (and the neck gets worse again). A secretary is well enough to go back to the office part time, says the healer, but needs several more weeks of treatment to be restored to full good health. "No," says the bureaucrat. So says he now for workmen's compensation or an insurance company, and so will he say under nationalized medicine. For when law and healing cannot both be served at once, he serves the statutes as they appear on the books; he goes by laws which, even though they be just in general, will be arbitrary and even cruel in given instances, since they were formulated to deal with the general problem rather than with this particular sufferer.

Since our nationalized health bureaucracies will doubtless be intricately overlapping and complicated like the present ones, only vaster and more numerous, a whole new profession should come into being:

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shepherds for perplexed citizens, guides to the maze. (And, please, since they are supposed to help ordinary Americans, let's not barricade them behind the label "ombudsmen" but name them something speakable, like "troubleshooters." Imagine a dull little epileptic dishwasher in Nashville confronted with a door marked OMBUDSMAN.)

The patient.

He is prey to as many fears as a Stone Age animist in a rain forest. Carcinogens may lurk in every can he opens; it's not just the odor and flavor that are missing from hothouse tomatoes, it's vitamins too; hormone-speeded-up, flavorless chickens. If they can put a man on the moon, why the hell can't they cure the common cold? For every miracle-cure dangled before him, he is prodded from behind by advertisements, the Surgeon General, and assorted experts with warnings of ailments no one ever heard of before; every new wonder-drug conjures up the ghosts of thalidomide babies.

He is injured; the X rays say his bones are healed, but he still feels bad. He is sick and doesn't know what's wrong. Whom can he trust but doctors? "Make my trouble go away. Cut it out. Give me a pill. Measure, test, shock me, do whatever you have to do to me. Just get it over with fast. Make me the way I was. I know you can." "All right, now," says the doctor, "do as I say." "Anything at all. Stick pins in me. I put myself in your hands. It's not just the pain, it's the uncertainty." "Don't worry, friend," says the health bureaucrat, "I'll pay the bill." "Oh, thank you, thank you." His pain and fear subside; gratitude wells up in him. But then, he continues to have diarrhea, and for some reason they won't pay for the special hot-pack and massage treatments, which were expensive but seemed to help a lot. They can't find what is causing that stabbing pain he still gets in his belly at odd times; the pain-killer makes him dull and anxious. His wife threatens to walk out on him if he doesn't get off his big behind—two years of it now!—and bring in the bacon, what kind of a man is he anyhow? He overhears his son tell a friend, "My old man is goofing off." He despairs. He blames. He has the habit of magic, but the magic isn't working. He doesn't know how to do it for himself. He casts about for ways to cheat.

At the worst, confidence in himself badly damaged, he makes a vocation of invalidism. Our culture teaches us to give the ill special care, to sympathize with the afflicted, and we give the largest compensation to the largest disability. Emotionally, this humaneness can be mistranslated: "It pays to be sick." By interpreting the pain of his spiritual anguish as pain from his injury or disease, a patient can magnify his trouble until he feels justified in giving up. His resultant incapacity is real. But how much of it is due to his primary ailment and how much to emotions using this ailment as a way to avoid responsibility and get some love and money illegitimately—in a word, to self-pity? And how much of this emotional cheating is done consciously and how much unconsciously? The best of doctors and bureaucrats must often be unsure of the answers to questions such as these. And many a doctor and every health bureaucrat is plagued by them day in and day out.

V

As bodily diseases have fallen one after another before the rational assault of laboratories and research, we have leaped into that very superstitiousness that rationalism so opposes. "Here," we say, "here is all the money you need. Make everything right." Against this blatant deifying of scientists, moral philosophy is needed. The white-gowned priests of laboratories cannot cure the ills of our selves, of conscience and society; yet we keep looking for somebody else to fix our moral, spiritual, and existential troubles for us, and if the state were paying, we would want it to pay for the fix. With a deep part of ourselves, we yearn for a scientific totalitarianism—a secular substitute for religion. It may very well be a good thing that in recent years the

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United States government, for whatever reasons, has begun to withdraw much of its massive, generation-long support from scientific research; some of that intellectual energy and hope may now be turned to considering ills of the sort that laboratories can never cure.

When national health insurance is fully implemented, we must be resolute not to expect too much from it. Let the poor be given access to as much health care as the middle classes now have; good as that is, in itself it cannot make them happy any more than it has made the middle classes happy; mostly it will free them for subtler kinds of unhappiness, less painful to the body than the other sort but not less damaging to the spirit. Moreover, there is evidence that, except for raising the level of health-care service for the poor, the United States, like Great Britain, is reaching a point of disproportion between increase in financial investment and increase in general health: a lot more money for medical care yields only a little more health. (See, among others, "Health and Health Services in the United States" by Edward J. Burger of the Science and Technology Policy Office of the National Science Foundation, in *Annals of Internal Medicine* for May 1974.)

Suppose some new physio-philosophical therapy is developed that works institutionally as well as Baum's method works personally. In the distress of our lives we may then clutch at it even as now we clutch at pills and knives. We may ask from it more than any sort of healing can give or, quite as important, more than we should accept. *You have done so much for us where they have failed. Save us.*

But that won't work either. How can it? How can diet, exercise, and relaxation satisfy the hungers of the soul any better than drugs and devices did? Well then, if the way we live now is causing so much woe, and if no normal healing can wholly cure us of the consequences of our way of life, *all right, we'll restructure society along medical lines, if that's what it takes to make us healthy.* So here we are back to health totalitarianism. Maybe it is the answer, even though to resort to it would be to ask the state, science, and medicine to do what only religion has ever done—cure our souls. But, you respond, we don't have souls these days, we have psyches, and besides God died a century or two ago and religion is decadent. Just because social change never before made men well, why assume it never will? Let's try it. Let's go all the way in the rational planning of society, with the health of all as our goal. Why not?

I can think of several good reasons why not. Two of the best are habit and cheating.

As habit is to the individual and as custom is to society, so bureaucracy is to the state: bureaucracy is the habit of law. In a way, the better the bureaucracy the more spiritually dangerous it is, for the more people will let it do for them. That is the very reason habit, custom, is so strong: it does most of your deciding for you. Strong, ineradicable, and dangerous: you don't have to be an Adolf Eichmann to allow bureaucracy to make those decisions for you that are intrinsically yours to make. And totalitarianism means total bureaucracy.

Two cheaters.

Like the pious Catholic wife who turns Mary's picture to the wall when she takes her lover into her bed, a middle-aged secular American woman, told she owes her arteriosclerosis to obesity, hides candy bars in twenty places around the house so she will never be caught eating; if she isn't caught it doesn't count. A man, going to three physicians without telling any of them he is seeing the other two, gets and consumes so much morphine to suppress pain from his kidney ailment that he becomes addicted.

What about me? I am no different, I am legion.

I know how to mitigate the consequences of living the way we live now, and it wouldn't cost me a cent to do it myself. I know what good would come of doing it, and I know what harm comes of not doing it: irritability, back attacks, anxiety, heart

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attacks. Yet I need the help of a healer to do what I should do to keep unhealth at bay. Perhaps something in me doesn't want to, wants not to, wants to cheat. Or is it that my habits are so deeply ingrained I cannot vanquish them? I don't know which, or why. I am legion.

Whom are we cheating? I don't know. But I am as sure as I am about anything human that this cheating of ours is not in itself caused by the way we live now or ever did live and that it will not be eradicated by changing our habits.

To look for "total physical, mental, and social well-being" in a scientifically planned society is to arouse the greatest possible mortal expectations and therefore, we being what we are, to guarantee disappointment. Less is more.

Suppose America does not go totalitarian. I think we won't: we really do believe that The Individual is more important than The State, and though we don't much like our form of government, neither do we blame it for most of our ills. Also, like nearly everybody else, we see in Soviet totalitarianism a model of *how not to do it*. For example, among other things the Soviets said: "Since mental illness is a result of social troubles, we will plan our society so scientifically that mental illness will disappear." They did, but it didn't. At all.

Suppose we nationalize health care in our usual piecemeal, jerry-built, muddled, "free enterprise" fashion, more or less on the lines of workmen's compensation. Not that compensation inspires all that much cheer as a model. It was established as a sort of no-fault job-accident insurance, in good part to stop the proliferation of workers' suits against employers; now, after half a century of increasing liberalization, it *causes* a larger number of litigations than any other law, at least in New York. As for nationalized health care for everyone, no matter where the lines are drawn, the mind boggles to contemplate the grievances that will be brought into being by the drawing of those lines. However rational the distinctions may be, to ordinary people the lines will always seem as crazy-crooked as time zones zipping up and down country roads and crossing state borders and slicing right through a farmer's field, arbitrary as Jove's thunderbolts used to be. "How come you paid for his teeth but not for mine?" "You mean losing my arm is only worth 312 weeks of back pay? I can see that for a plumber, maybe, but I'm a violinist!"

Suppose, moreover, that we begin to restrain and control technology. In more ways than one, especially in the matter of technological hyperorganization, we too have shown the world *how not to do it* (though the world hasn't paid much attention to the warning). Still, with luck we may get through the present crisis spiritually alive enough to learn something from our own hideous mistakes and to put at least some of what we learn into practice.

Suppose all these. Then how much can we reasonably expect from the irregular, inconsistent, greatly expanded, state-supported health care evolving among us now? How much, that is to say, beyond the clear benefit to the poor, which justifies it all.

Not much.

What would be more useful now is a new breed of unorthodox physio-philosophical healer.

By a philosophical healer, I mean one who has knowledge of the workings of both body and mind and, more importantly, has a conception of the whole person, of human nature itself, both within the individual and in his connections with others and with social institutions. Baum is such a healer. His philosophy has put together familiar therapeutic ingredients in a new way, to construct a program with a limited, achievable goal. To follow this program helps you cope with some of the consequences of the way you live without threatening to change you so radically as to scare you into repudiating his program. It lets you be yourself, only healthier; you don't have to go the whole yoga and yogurt route and become someone else; if you want

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to change radically, that's up to you. It is already of real value to a few, potentially to many—and it is guaranteed not to make a swami of you. Baum puts himself—not only his skills and knowledge but his self—in the service of neither a religious cult nor a political ideology, of neither money nor the state, but of his patients and their health.

I do not presume to understand the ins and outs of his method; I only hope that it is not largely a function of one man's personality and gifts but can be explained and hence transmitted to others. There are two reasons I have such a doubt. One is that, so far as I can make out, an essential ingredient of Baum's method is the exercise of sympathetic imagination, and I'm not sure how much of this can be transmitted. He is confident that he will be able to reduce the essence of his program to a teachable method, to institutionalize it, and I hope that he does. But my own experience as a teacher assures me that even his most successful student would be unlikely to equal, much less surpass, him in that imaginative vitality which always presses one to try something just a little better, which feels what another is feeling, and which is the best of all safeguards against hardening of the spiritual arteries, against indifference, boredom, the encroachments of habit. The other reason has to do with faith. A marvelously mysterious ingredient in most sorts of healing is trust. If I distrust this medicine, this doctor, this regimen, how much will subjecting myself to it help cure me? Experiments have demonstrated that if a doctor gives me a placebo that he believes is a drug that will help me, I am much more likely to be helped than if he gives me a drug that can indeed help my ailments but that he believes to be a placebo (and the efficacy of which I will therefore distrust). If this can be true of some chemicals, how much more true must it be of every kind of therapy that relies upon words. A worker with an old back injury came to Baum after three unsuccessful operations. Having followed the program for a few weeks, steadily improving but by no means well, still in trouble, he announced that he did not believe this program would do the job: nothing but another operation could possibly do it. I have no way of knowing which course would have been better for him, but I am convinced that his distrust of Baum's method was in itself enough to insure the failure of that method to restore him to health even if he had continued to follow it. At the other extreme, I have seen Baum's method produce splendid results in those who believed it would and who followed it. He is nothing like a faith healer, but if you put up a barrier of distrust against his method, it—he—can't help you much. How much of this is common to any therapy which relies heavily on the word and how much is attributable to Baum's personality, I do not know.

Not even if it were widespread could such a therapeutic method in itself radically alter the way we live now, but it can help us live better individually, improve the way *I* live now. The world-changers are leery of such a method because it develops restraint and self-reliance. Still, if a lot of us quietly work hard at living better, we may discover one day that, without noticing when or how the change took place, we are no longer living the way we used to. As with a married couple after they've gone through a bad stretch together, or a man who has worked long and hard at his craft and discovers he likes his job after all, or a woman who realizes one afternoon that the place in the world she most wants to be at that moment is where she is in her own kitchen, no one thing seems to have changed all that much, yet everything is different.

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Foreword by Aaron Copland

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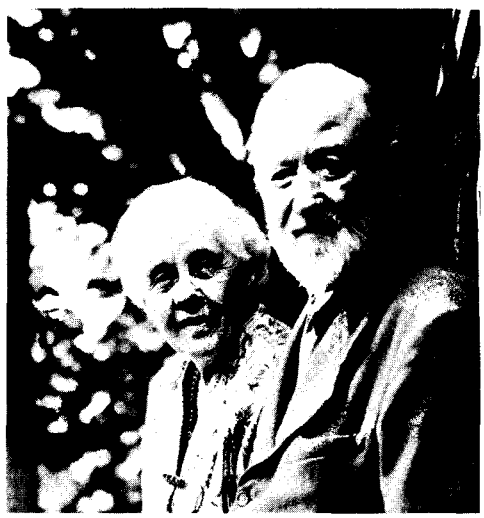

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The Mysteries of Marcel

BARBARA GOLD

MARCEL DUCHAMP: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even. *By John Golding. Viking Press. $7.50.*
MARCEL DUCHAMP IN PERSPECTIVE. *Edited by Joseph Masheck. Prentice-Hall. $8.95 cloth, $3.95 Spectrum paper.*
MARCEL DUCHAMP. *Edited by Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine. New York Graphic Society Ltd. with the Museum of Modern Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art. $25.*

"There has been a kind of Duchampitis recently." The speaker was Robert Smithson, the recently deceased earthworks artist. The occasion was an interview printed in Joseph Masheck's new collection of essays about Marcel Duchamp—essays that range from classic comments by Guillaume Apollinaire in the nineteenth century to sophisticated modern analyses by Clement Greenberg, William Rubin, and Mr. Masheck himself.

Duchampitis is not so bad as it sounds. There are many reasons for it, the foremost being that the present time seems to need an art aimed as much at the intellect as at the eye. This is quintessentially what Marcel Duchamp was about—or at least what he said he was about. He may have more followers than any artist who has ever lived, and many of those followers may have had no real experience of his work. "I was interested in ideas," he said once, "not merely in visual products. I wanted to put painting again in the service of the mind."

And he did, or tried to do, just that. Last year's "Marcel Duchamp: A Retrospective Exhibition," held at the Philadelphia Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was almost as much an exercise in reading and putting together as it was in looking, and was almost as much an exercise in reverence for reputation (since the master had made only one work, and that in secret, since 1923) as it was an aesthetic experience.

The catalogue of that exhibition, edited by Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine and comprising another collection of essays and comments on the master, is almost as much a discussion of literature and literary thought as it is a volume of art criticism.

Marcel Duchamp did not begin as the artist most likely to answer contemporary needs or even as an artist likely to succeed in any modernist idiom. He was born into the home of a bourgeois notary in Rouen, was supported by his family when he began his artistic ventures, was considered bright but not likely to be any more outstanding than his two brothers, Raymond Duchamp-Villon and Jacques Villon.

He began as a relatively conventional painter. Cézanne influenced arrangements of his early canvases of "Chess Players." He inherited the thick, pasty palette of his landscapes from the past. Only a suggestion of cubism, the one painterly movement no

✪ BARBARA GOLD is art critic for the Baltimore Sunday *Sun*.

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artist working in the early part of the century could escape, enters in such paintings as an early portrait of his family, in which he begins to break their forms into planes and facets reminiscent of early Picasso or Braque.

Not until 1912, eleven years before he was to execute what most people assumed to be his last work, did he begin to approach the notoriety that would, paradoxically, attach to him after he supposedly stopped making art. Nineteen-twelve was the year of the Armory Show in New York. Duchamp's contribution, which his two artist brothers asked him to remove or rename, was "Nude Descending a Staircase" or, as one reviewer called it, "explosion in a shingle factory."

The painting was reviled on all sides. Conservatives considered the subject matter improper. Cubist painters, equally doctrinaire in their views, considered the naked body an inappropriate subject for serious painting. The general public simply hated the piece. Duchamp took the abuse, withdrew the canvas from a subsequent Paris show, and announced that he would, henceforth, "not be very much interested in groups."

He worked alone, turned from painting to other, often newly invented, modes. He drew a moustache on a picture of the Mona Lisa and exhibited that. He collected dust and showed that as a prized collection. He invented a drag alter ego and then portrayed himself or showed art as Rrose Sélavy. Man Ray took a 1920 photo of Duchamp in this identity and inscribed it "to my friend Snow White."

Duchamp showed found objects and produced what he called the "ready-made," the famous urinal, a snow shovel titled "In Advance of a Broken Arm," a bottle rack. Today such presentations would be considered kitsch. Duchamp made them revolutionary. He renounced art, painted on glass, dropped bits of string and glued them to boards, composed musical scores by choosing notes at random. He worked eight years on "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even," a large glass and metal structure that is still one of the most elusive works of art ever produced—so elusive it has defeated almost every writer who has tried to explain it.

John Golding is no exception. He takes on the "Large Glass" in one of the Viking Press Art in Context series and tackles the work in terms of its historical, literary, and imagistic context. The kind of introductory format—brief, generally succinct, with lots of pictures—that this series presents is helpful for most works. Knowing what influences go into a piece, what books or general types of literature the artist preferred, is always an aid in understanding a piece of art.

With Duchamp's "Large Glass," all this is somehow information that doesn't tell very much. The "Large Glass" is simply too mysterious—as Golding himself acknowledges.

He does trace the history of the bride images on the "Large Glass" back through all Duchamp's work since the incipient cubist portraits and drawings of 1911. He notes the "sad, falling linear rhythms" and the "fact that the colour harmonies, superficially those of classical cubism, have a doomed, leaden quality to them," and he follows the ways these qualities were extended onto the surface of the glass piece. He notes the eroticism throughout the master's painted and drawn work and the concomitant, even contradictory need to depersonalize those erotic images. He finds an "increasingly veiled and allusive" quality that has its source in French literature. He looks at chronophotographs of fencers and finds that "successive images of the fencing foil have become the phallic barbs" and accounts "perhaps for some of the sadistic flavour that underlies the brilliant, mocking draughtsmanship." And yet there is barely any room to prove any of this, to do more than analyze Duchamp's interest in the work of Raymond Roussel or the artist's "attempt to give concrete tangible expression to concepts that were purely linguistic."

The "Bachelors" are discussed in chapter two. There is an analysis of the ready-mades

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that seem to be reflected in the lower half of the glass, where the bachelors are located. Duchamp's development of a personal physics or "pataphysics" is noted. The stripping of the bride is part three of the book. Golding locates the sources for these images in Duchamp's curiosity about alchemy, suggesting that the first of the studies for the images making up this part of the "Large Glass" have their roots in a "treatise by the philosopher Solidonius." The concept of the stripping of the virgin or bride, he finds, is, in alchemical literature, symbolic of the purification of the stone or of primal matter. He suggests that "If alchemy interested Duchamp it was because he saw in it a kind of cosmic chess. . . ."

The book ends with an epilogue which notes and barely skims the surface of "Étant Donnés," Duchamp's last work, the art he turned out to have been making during all those years everyone thought he had given up art, the art that is permanently installed (and may never be photographed) as the conclusion to the Philadelphia Museum's permanent and definitive installation of Duchamp works.

In a way, Golding may have done all he could or was required to do in this small and introductory format. He mentions all of Duchamp's works, ties them all into the "Large Glass" as either preparation or source—and then adds the final piece. He suggests the complexity of the master's thought by touching on his curiosity about alchemy, his interest in developing his own science, his preference for the allusiveness of French literature. He suggests the ambivalence of the master's attitude toward art by concluding with a mention of the "Green Box," the miniature compendium of all his work with which Duchamp catalogued his oeuvre and implicitly acknowledged that he was the artist he had pretended not to be.

This book, then, is purely introductory. It cannot, if only because of its length and format, be more. Duchamp himself has seen to that. Considering him seriously means something more extended than a book in this series can be; it means delving into all his literary sources, all his flirtations with alchemy, all his abstruse symbolism, and, on top of all that, spending time psychoanalyzing all his motivations.

Duchamp himself made such an elaborate effort essential. He so intertwined his life with his art, with his games, with his philosophy, that no single element can be considered separately, that separating his imagery or even his individual art works into chapters or categories, as Mr. Golding has had to do, means leaving out so much that Duchamp never comes through. A Duchampian effort may be necessary simply to talk about Duchamp.

Collecting essays, however perceptive any of them may have been when they were originally published in magazines or catalogues, will not, unfortunately for Joseph Masheck who has done just that, solve the problem either. Prentice-Hall has what it calls an Artists in Perspective series which, like the Viking "context" effort, attempts to understand art and artists through analyses of their aesthetics and culture. Masheck has collected most of the major essays on Duchamp that have come out over the last few years. Nearly everyone who is anyone in the art world has had something to say about Duchamp at one time or another.

Thomas Hess, formerly editor of *Art News* magazine and a long-time exponent of abstract expressionist painting, writes in a 1965 essay called "J'Accuse Marcel Duchamp" that "Marcel Duchamp over the years brilliantly has consolidated a position that is practically invulnerable to serious criticisms." This is, perhaps, one of the truest comments made about the artist yet.

Clement Greenberg, equally disturbed at what he also regards as the unforgivable rejection by Duchamp of conventional art historical thinking, notes, "It was left to Duchamp to create what I call avant gardism." He deplores the drift toward the nonpictorial that he feels Duchamp's years of nonvisual art activity have both induced and validated.

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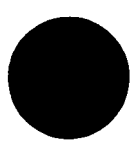
Hawthorne's Tales

Published in three volumes, each with a Historical Commentary by J. Donald Crowley, as IX, X, and XI of the Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, edited by William Charvat (1905–1966), Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson. Fredson Bowers, textual editor. Volume IX: *Twice-told Tales,* $21.00. Volume X: *Mosses from an Old Manse,* $21.00. Volume XI: *The Snow-Image, and Uncollected Tales,* $17.00.



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There are comments by artists. Jasper Johns, the contemporary painter perhaps most influenced by the older man, observes, "The art community feels Duchamp's presence and his absence. He has changed the condition of being here." Johns is correct, and no book on Duchamp today can ignore those changes. His ideas, general orientation, presumed rejection of art, posture of disdain toward the art world and of cynicism toward life, attempt to integrate all parts of his being into a single whole—all these have become part of what so many young artists seek today. One of Robert Pincus-Witten's essays from *Artforum* (the magazine which he serves as senior editor and for which Masheck frequently writes) deals with all the artists—Bruce Nauman, Trisha Brown, William Wegman—who have looked at their bodies and at parts of their bodies as art in what Pincus-Witten sees as an autobiographical and mythological theater of the conceptual—all of it an outgrowth of Duchamp's attitudes and actions. All these essays have become part of the Duchamp literature. Some, like the statements by artists, appear whenever such items are needed for collections of comments about the master.

The one essay here that should be provocative is Masheck's introduction, and it does not quite live up to the writing he has been doing for *Artforum*. Again, perhaps, the predetermined format of a book in an established series may have overwhelmed his attentions. What might have been a philosophical inquiry into Duchamp's art becomes instead a workaday history, divided into a section for the artist's beginnings, a section for the ready-mades and their progeny, a chronological summary of the move toward the "Large Glass," and a section called "Drop-out" which leads into "Étant Donnés," the final work. This last section does make two important points: First, all criticism written on Duchamp before 1966—and that includes many of the essays Masheck includes—assumes he had truly abandoned art. Second, the last piece exists in opposition to and as a continuation of the "Large Glass." The verisimilitude of the last piece is seen as a sort of dialogue with the abstract, complicated, totally visible glass.

These are indispensable introductory premises. They are useful lead-ins to the essays that follow, but Masheck's compilation from the problem endemic to all those who attempt to create introductions to Duchamp or to put him in context or perspective. The man somehow set his own context, established his own perspectives. His years of apparently not-making art became a commentary on his art; his refusal to make a living from his art set that art apart; his years of devotion to chess created an aura of rationalism that clung to everything he did; his ultimate contradiction of it all with the final piece reinforced the air of ambiguity that characterizes his art.

Richard Hamilton, the British artist who has re-created the "Large Glass," studied it, and analyzed the "Green Box" as well, gave a lecture nearly ten years ago at Brandeis University at which time, content, the number of slides, the heat, and impatience all piled one on the other to turn the intended educational experience into a Duchampian experience of endurance, endlessness, boredom, and vague dissatisfaction. What turned out to be memorable about that lecture was not the information provided or the theory, if any, presented, but the feeling of having been there, of having been present, of having participated —even if the full significance of it all was not readily apparent. As with a Duchamp work or exhibition that is always "almost complete," the lecture left one with the feeling of having been a bit bored but of being on the brink—of something. Brief introductions and collections of essays, most of which attempt historical analyses or aesthetic appreciations, cannot begin to convey this feeling.

The Philadelphia Museum-Museum of Modern Art volume, by now the definitive book on Duchamp, comes closest to this goal—perhaps because it was based on immediate contact with the actual work. Hamilton's (by now written and condensed) dis-

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sertation on the "Large Glass" is a most important element of this catalogue. Hamilton does not buy the alchemical allusions and literary references the others turn to so readily. The piece is, he says, "born of Duchamp's perversity." Therefore, he questions everything about it, numbering and analyzing each separate image. He alone is able to see Duchamp's work in its entirety, to ask whether or not the final tableau "the three-dimensional construction forming the center of a trilogy awaiting the final unimagined, probably unimaginable, restatement, is the four-dimensional Bride?" He alone has the credentials of scholarship and art to see the master in so dramatic a light, to appreciate Duchamp's contradictions for what they are. "Duchamp is remote and alone with his high art that he held to be artless."

The catalogue contains as well a complete chronology and bibliography; many pictures, not enough of which are in color; an introduction by Anne d'Harnoncourt which never loses sight of "the crucial question of his career"—"Can one make works which are not works of art?" She also is careful to note that "thorough acquaintance with his oeuvre is a matter as much of reading as of looking." Awareness of this kept both the exhibit and the book in focus. Michel Sanouillet's essay on "Marcel Duchamp and the French Intellectual Tradition" defines that tradition and then goes on, more importantly, to look for what made Duchamp different from the many adherents of that tradition, to go out on a limb to suggest his alertness to the French oral as well as written tradition, and to give reasons for that suggestion.

The leading Duchamp scholars are represented in this book: Arturo Schwarz on alchemy, Lawrence Steefel on the machine, John Tancock in a summary of the leading contemporaries who have followed the master, Kynaston McShine (co-organizer of the show) on Duchamp's need for a feminine alter ego, Robert Lebel on his relationship with André Breton, Octavio Paz on the final work, and more than sixty artists with brief statements (many done for other purposes but nonetheless apropos) which form "A Collective Portrait of Marcel Duchamp."

The artists and writers, including David Antin who contributes a separate, lowercase word portrait and Lucy Lippard who has compiled a randomly paragraphed child's bedtime story about Duchamp, are often, as was Richard Hamilton, better able to communicate what Duchamp was about than the scholars. The artists are able to capture, even in the medium of the printed catalogue, something of the nonverbal, antic, deliberately illogical qualities that make his art so difficult to treat by conventional art historical methods. "Drink an orange juice laced with sunshine and spring and you'll see Duchamp," Yoko Ono wrote in 1972. Hans Richter outlined his hand on a letter. Frank O'Hara dedicated a poem to Rrose Sélavy. In 1951 Willem de Kooning called him a "one-man movement."

The artists seem less afraid than the scholars to have doubts about whether or not there is a coherent, logical line permeating Duchamp's work, less afraid to suggest that, if this line does not exist, then those attempting to analyze that work in a logical intellectual fashion may be doomed almost from the beginning. The exhibition volume has become definitive because it includes all these possibilities.

Duchamp himself has, somehow, controlled all possibilities about himself. Duchamp, refusing to repeat himself, seeking contradiction of himself and of what was happening around him, deliberately demanding obfuscation and ambivalence, renouncing art while making art, espousing the most literal version of reality in his final piece while preferring an allusive abstraction throughout all his previous life, integrating that life with everything he did, has, somehow, made it virtually impossible to explain him. Putting him in historical context will not do. Cultural context does not define him. Reading his art can be informative, but reading a book or essay about him offers only the most limited entry into his work and none of the experiential qualities of that work. He has contributed, perhaps more than any other artist, to forming

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the aesthetic history of this time and he has, somehow, also climbed outside that history—to a spot from which he can see an art, exhibition, and publishing scene he may consider his true final piece.

The Art of the Medieval Mystery Play

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WAKEFIELD CYCLE. *By John Gardner. Southern Illinois University Press. $8.95.*

Reviewed by MARTIN STEVENS

John Gardner is undoubtedly more widely known for his fiction, including *Grendel, The Sunlight Dialogues,* and *Nickel Mountain,* than for his works of criticism on medieval literature, which include such translations of Middle English poems as the *Complete Works of the Gawain-Poet* and numerous scholarly articles in such journals as *Neophilologus* and *PMLA*. He has now added a book-length critical study of the Middle English Wakefield Plays to his credentials as a medievalist. *The Construction of the Wakefield Cycle* is part of a series entitled Literary Structures, published by Southern Illinois University Press under the general editorship of Mr. Gardner himself and devoted to the study of two kinds of writers: those major figures "whose complex thought has never been worked out in exact detail and great early writers who have not been adequately understood because their intellectual premises have been foreign to modern readers."

Mr. Gardner does not tell us in which of these two categories he would place his own study, though on the basis of the two pre-

MARTIN STEVENS is professor of medieval literature and chairman of the Department of English at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He is co-editor of a new edition of the Towneley Cycle now in preparation for the Early English Text Society. In addition, he has published numerous scholarly articles on Old and Middle English literature.

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viously published books in the series, B. J. Weber's *The Construction of Paradise Lost* and J. W. Hunt's *Forms of Glory: Structure and Sense in Virgil's "Aeneid,"* one would infer that he means to assign it to the second group. The Wakefield Cycle is, of course, best known for its celebrated *Second Shepherd's* pageant and for its other various segments written in a unique and highly artful nine-line stanza which is generally attributed to an unknown poet-dramatist called the Wakefield Master. As a full medieval Corpus Christi cycle, the Wakefield plays include thirty-two pageants (or playlets) from the *Creation* to *Doomsday,* concentrating on the Passion and the Resurrection but also including selected scenes from the Old Testament (emphasizing prefiguration), from the Nativity, and from the Ministry of Christ. The Wakefield Cycle, on the basis of several internal allusions, has been assigned to the city of Wakefield in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where the plays were probably performed from the mid-fifteenth century to the early years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The cycle is sometimes referred to as *The Towneley Plays,* after the Lancashire family which for years owned the manuscript. It is a diverse collection of plays, written in different styles and no doubt borrowed at least in part from existing cycles, as attested by five plays which, in many details, are identical to their counterparts in the great York Cycle of plays. In his book, Mr. Gardner sets out to demonstrate that the Wakefield Cycle is a unified work that brings to fruition the art of the medieval English mystery play.

One must approach Mr. Gardner's book with some caution. It is not, as the extravagant statement on the dust jacket has it, "the first detailed and complete analysis of the entire Wakefield pageant cycle." Indeed, it gives detailed analysis of only a select number of pageants and dismisses the bulk of the cycle as "dull" work needed to fill out the prescribed plot of the Corpus Christi drama. In breadth it takes on no more than Walter Meyers's recent *A Figure Given: Typology in the Wakefield Plays,* and it does so with considerably less attention to central design; in depth it does not approach the meticulous detail that one finds in Millicent Carey's study, *The Wakefield Group in the Towneley Cycle,* published in the thirties, nor the intellectual excitement of interpretation and scholarship in V. A. Kolve's more general critical study, *A Play Called Corpus Christi.* Mr. Gardner probably went to press before Hans-Juergen Diller's *Redeformen des Englischen Misterienspiels* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973) appeared, but one wishes that the scope of his analysis approached more closely the scholarly standard of Mr. Diller's study, which focuses on the forms of discourse peculiar to the major cycles, and which, in the process, has a good deal more to say about the art of the Wakefield plays than Mr. Gardner's more specialized book-length study.

Perhaps the most fundamental critical assumption that shapes Mr. Gardner's vision of the Wakefield plays is his premise that this cycle is a late culmination of medieval mystery drama. While it is generally agreed that the Wakefield Cycle is indeed a late medieval compilation, it would be difficult to prove that it is significantly later than the extant texts of the other English Corpus Christi collections. Mr. Gardner's treatment of the Wakefield plays assumes throughout that they are an improvement over the other surviving cycles: ". . . in the Wakefield cycle we are dealing with drama which has moved farther beyond the original conventions of the English mystery than has drama from, say, Chester or Hegge." Speaking specifically of the Abraham pageant, he observes "the general superiority of the Wakefield version to all others strongly suggests that it came late." The fact is, however, that we have little evidence, if any, of early dramatic activity beyond dramatic processions and that the manuscripts of all surviving cycles stem at the earliest from the late fifteenth century. To make early-late comparisons, therefore, is rather more the result of the critic's imagination than a matter of historical record. The theory becomes even more disturbing when one realizes that for Gardner, early is invariably equated with "primitive" or "dull" and late with "complex" and "interesting": "It be-

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comes worthwhile to ask again just what the mystery pageant was in its earlier, simpler form—or more bluntly, why a thing so dull to us was so appealing to the people of its day. . . ." or "It was once a commonplace that the mystery pageants are primitive art. Perhaps so in their earliest form, but surely they were not by the fifteenth century." This latter statement, quite apart from its acceptance of the outworn notion of progress in literary art forms, implies that we have dramatic texts that date back to a period before the fifteenth century from which to study the evolution of the genre. But, in fact, we do not, and consequently Gardner's argument begs its own question.

There is, in all this, something even more disturbing. The impulse to see in the records of civilization an evolutionary progression from simple to complex is in some fundamental ways to disparage the early in favor of the late. Medievalists who hold that view must ultimately regard their subject with a measure of condescension, and Gardner is no exception even when he finds much to admire in the Wakefield Cycle. One has the feeling that in his eyes the Wakefield Master, at his best, rose above his milieu. His praise is almost always conditioned by negatives, by a distinct sense that whatever aspires to greatness in the medieval drama is accidental: "So the question arises: if the audience was not in fact simple-minded, and if playwrights, like preachers, were capable of certain kinds of subtlety when they chose to use them, how are we to account for the manifest dullness and simplicity of so many of the pageants?" In the final analysis, he sees the mystery play as "a closed evolutionary line, a culmination," which, in its fundamental form, is incapable of merging into new shapes during the Renaissance and later ages. Disregarding altogether the important contribution that this drama made in its conception of time and place to the later English drama—the English history play, for example, directly depends upon the mystery play universe—Gardner views the medieval stage as a distant and alien environment for the modern consciousness. I would challenge such a notion and argue, with Bertolt Brecht (who found a certain inspiration for

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his epic theater in medieval dramatic form), that the modern postnaturalistic stage is fundamentally the same as the stage of the Middle Ages. Interestingly, Gardner's apparent low esteem for the medieval consciousness informs as well his fascinating parable, *Grendel,* and thus seems to be a pervasive point of view. Grendel, as antihero (and thus very much as modern commentator), works as fictive spokesman to expose the dark side of *Beowulf* precisely because Gardner thinks that the *Beowulf* poet was blind to that quality in his work. The *Beowulf* poet emerges in Gardner's fiction a *scop,* a reshaper who, in Gardner's words, "stares strange-eyed at the mindless world and turns dry sticks to gold." I don't mean to review *Grendel* here; the critics have justly praised it as a "revisionist" fiction for its bold, inventive, and keenly humorous perspective of the Anglo-Saxon heroic ideal. But what works in the area of literary satire does not work in straightforward criticism. Even *Beowulf* scholars have lately concerned themselves with the more somber implications of Beowulf's exploits, and they have argued, persuasively, that the poet himself supplied that angle of vision. The critic who accepts as his basic tenet that the work upon which he is concentrating is primitive, simple-minded, and essentially alien to his own aesthetic can do no more than belabor the obvious or dismiss the unfamiliar. If twentieth-century philosophy and aesthetics have taught us anything, it is to distrust any formulations about the "savage" or primitive mind.

One finds in Mr. Gardner's book two underlying assumptions about his subject. First, the Wakefield Cycle, in his view, is unified according to a plan put together by a single reviser, or as he puts it in his last chapter, by "some medieval playwriting committee." Most scholars, I believe, would accept the premise of unity, though none, to my knowledge, has speculated as widely or as summarily about the process by which that unity was achieved. One wishes, however, that he had sought more pointedly to relate the individual pageants to the alleged master plan and to state more clearly and fully what controlling ideas he found in the cycle. Indeed, I recall only one such idea being mentioned anywhere—what Gardner calls "the focal agon of the cycle as a whole, a battle of the true God and Lucifer-Satan, the cosmic pretender." But even this idea lacks systematic treatment and is totally dropped in the discussion of several pageants, as, for example, that of the *Processus Noe cum Filiis,* which finally is left without comment about its place in the "construction of the Wakefield Cycle."

Gardner's second underlying critical assumption is that the Wakefield plays are to be judged for their literary rather than dramatic content. This, of course, is a legitimate approach for a critic to take, but it must nevertheless be seen as one with grave limitations for what it can finally say about the construction of such a multifaceted work of art as a cycle of medieval plays. One simply cannot disregard such matters as recurrent stage settings, or the use of special props, or the presence of music in the cycle for thematic effect. Gardner, even in the face of Glynne Wickham's comprehensive study, shrugs off spectacle as unimportant to the overall effect in the production of a cycle. Thus, even where spectacle is verifiable, as in the Wakefield *Pharao* play, which adds a stage direction indicating that Pharao and his troop drowned in the Red Sea (*Tunc merget eos mare*), Gardner remains silent. The *Pharao* play, in fact, becomes much more significant when one realizes that it makes a thematic statement about the contrast of stage magic and miracle. Moses' transformation of a wand into a serpent is seen as the trick of a "sotell swayn" by Pharao, as if Moses rather than God were responsible for this feat. But the audience learns from it that stage magic is nothing less than an evocation of the miraculous, a lesson that the tyrant fails to learn even at the moment of his spectacular death (however it was staged).

Gardner has no interest in such questions. For him the most important features to evaluate a pageant by are its capacity for allegorical interpretation, its exegetical jokes (a device he likes especially), and its realism of dialogue. He points out much

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that is valuable here (for instance, the Herod-Christ parody in which Herod is characterized as "kyng of kyngys," or the interesting discussion of the interrogation of Christ in the *Buffeting* as a burlesque witch trial), but he frequently claims greater results than his very limited inquiry permits. Rarely does he address himself to the many themes, episodes, and character types that serve to bind the various pageants together. One looks in vain for any recognition of recurrent situations such as the gift giving of three shepherds followed by three kings, or the comedy of Joseph and Mary in the *Annunciation* followed by the comedy of Mak and Gyll in the *Second Shepherd's Play*. It is such thematic repetition which in the final analysis can tell us the most about the construction of the Wakefield Cycle.

Finally, a word about Gardner's treatment of the Wakefield Master. Bearing in mind that we do not know who this poet was, and that our only way to identify him has been as the author of a particularly complex nine-line stanza, we must, in the interest of careful scholarship, be cautious about attributing to him simply all that is admirable in the cycle regardless of stanzaic form. The reasoning behind such attribution is circular: The Wakefield Master is identified in the first place as the writer of nine-line stanzas with a certain distinct literary flair; therefore, all other parts of the cycle with literary flair must also have been written by the Wakefield Master. Such reasoning, of which Gardner is unfortunately guilty throughout, ultimately renders entirely useless the process of singling out the contributor who wrote what is a uniformly distinct and unusual stanza—a criterion that is, after all, ascertainable, and that, in the case of these stanzas, argues against the sort of writing committee Gardner allows as an option for the revision of the cycle. To attribute to the so-called Wakefield Master all that is good and to others all that is dull is to assume that great poets are incapable of mediocre verse. The whole notion that quality is the work of one "master" is, I think, alien to sound criticism. It is such reasoning that yielded alleged "spurious" passages in many great masters, including the *Beowulf* poet, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. By the same reason-

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ing one could set out to prove that the author of *Nickel Mountain* could not possibly have written *The Construction of the Wakefield Cycle.*

Between the Window and the Mirror

THE POET'S STORY. An Anthology of Stories. *Edited by Howard Moss. Macmillan. $7.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM F. CLAIRE

Mark Van Doren once described the short story as an art that rescues individuals from oblivion, and a good anthologist may be defined as one who rescues material that might otherwise have been lost, or consigned to oblivion. Howard Moss, poetry editor of *The New Yorker,* and poet himself, has performed a valuable service by discovering twenty-two short stories by contemporary American poets, all of whom had not previously collected a volume of stories of their own.

The rescued stories fall into two broad categories, those that extend themes familiar to the poet and those that deal with the traditional methods of a well-written story. All of them are "finds" in the sense that some originally appeared in now defunct publications while others might have been lost in quarterly, monthly, or "little" magazines.

Half of the twenty-two stories are by women poets, and the oldest is one published by Edna St. Vincent Millay in a *Century Magazine* of 1923. The latest, appearing over fifty years later, is by the Pulitzer Prize poet Anne Sexton, from *Ms.* magazine. In between there are four stories from the much-missed *Kenyon Review* (John Berryman, Jean Garrigue, Josephine Jacobsen, Mona Van Duyn) to stories from periodicals such as the *Harvard Advocate, Tomorrow,* the *Western Review, New Letters,* and more familiar publications such as the *Partisan Review* and *Atlantic Monthly.*

One story originally published posthumously—over five years after the death of Sylvia Plath—is an account of a shock treatment and, like her other principal work of fiction, *The Bell Jar,* is explicitly autobiographical. Titled "Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams," it flows easily from the narrator-secretary of an outpatient clinic who records the history of various psychiatric illnesses and who comes face to face with a shock treatment device herself, a box that "seems to be eyeing me, copper-head-ugly, from its coil of electric wires, the latest model in Johnny-Panic killers." No one has written more terrifyingly of this experience than Sylvia Plath, and the story illuminates the terror at the razor-edge of her last poems in *Ariel.*

The rescued story of Muriel Rukeyser's has a Simenon quality, a tale perfectly told of a man who successfully murders his wife by pushing her off a cliff during a picnic. He is able to finesse the funeral but discovers, despite a perfect crime, that he will be forever haunted by the eyes of those other members of "The Club" who "saw his crime, all his life long. It was that they recognized him because of their own crimes." And, additionally, that he would recognize those others "who had committed such violence against human spirit and flesh, such murder of assault or treachery against life, all his life long."

Three or four other stories fit the Rukeyser category, what Moss terms "window stories" with clearly defined characters, and some kind of classical denouement. Others, the larger part, are memory stories, or "mirror stories" of the imagination fused with dream or memory, as Proust (whom the editor has written about) might have written. And some attempt a fusion of the two ways of poets coming to grips with their material. To reduce the stories to short summaries, however, would deny their impact or their need, in the first place, to be written. As Moss has noted, in a brilliant introduction, "Stories written by poets usually take place somewhere between the window and the mirror—stories of revelation objectified to a point, but not to the

✪ WILLIAM F. CLAIRE, former editor of *Voyages,* is currently director of the Washington, D.C. office of the State University of New York.

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point of realism. They bear the poet's particular badge: the mysterious and the real held in suspension."

The volume has a peculiar hold, and one that is not likely to slip away. Many of the stories exceed in excellence work by contemporary short story writers and, taken together, represent a considerable discovery. A future anthology might include stories by poets who have, in fact, published volumes of their own stories—poets like Conrad Aiken, Howard Nemerov, William Carlos Williams, Robert Penn Warren, Delmore Schwartz, Mark Van Doren—to further explore some of the possibilities opened to readers of fiction by the Moss anthology. As Moss says, "Poets may come to fiction for any number of reasons, but poets *of* fiction, as well as writers who come to it *through* poetry—window or mirror or both—invariably have one thing in common: they have style."

The Conundrum of Modern Africa

AFRICA SINCE 1875. *By Robin Hallett. University of Michigan Press.* $15.

Reviewed by S. JAY WALKER

Of all the sights I witnessed during a year spent in Africa in the late 1960s, the most memorable appeared at the foot of Mt. Kilamanjaro. Along a dusty road came striding a Masai warrior, regal in his robes, his beads, his pierced ears, his ochered hair. In his left hand he carried a five-foot spear, laid familiarly across his shoulder; in his right a transistor radio, turned to full volume. And from the radio came the voice of Frank Sinatra singing "Strangers in the Night."

This incongruous contact—almost clash—of cultures, languages, technologies, is the great conundrum of modern Africa,

✪S. JAY WALKER is a professor of English and chairman of the Black Studies Program at Dartmouth College. He has made five trips to Africa, most recently in December 1973 as a visiting lecturer in the Ivory Coast, Gambia, and Senegal.

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and I have read no single book that explains it better than Robin Hallett's *Africa Since 1875*. It may seem rash to attempt to explain nearly a century's history of a continent as large as Africa in one book, even one so thick as this; nevertheless, Mr. Hallett, by restricting his focus to certain easily manageable lines, makes his work both comprehensive and accessible.

Mr. Hallett restricts his study to the emergence of an Africa that has fused European and African concepts to formulate modern states and to strive, for better or worse, toward modernity. The year 1875 is chosen, arbitrarily, as the starting date for the fusion. Before then Europeans occupied, apart from Algeria and South Africa, only a few minor coastal settlements. But by 1914, only Ethiopia and Liberia were not the captives of one or the other of the European states. Decolonization proceeded nearly as swiftly as conquest. By 1966, all of Africa—except for Spanish Rio de Oro and Portuguese Guinea in the north, and Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa at the foot of the continent—was again in the hands of its indigenous peoples. So swiftly has that process moved that, at the time Mr. Hallett wrote, the Portuguese provinces seemed as firmly in the hands of whites as did South Africa and Rhodesia. Events have outpaced publication.

The period 1875 to 1974 is thus the time of maximum European influence on Africa, and it is that influence that Mr. Hallett, a university lecturer in South Africa, studies with admirable even-handedness. He is no apologist for colonialism, showing that, with a few heroic exceptions, Europeans based their occupation on racial superiority; that they conquered, however haphazardly, to serve the ends of their home governments; and that their "stewardship," until near its very conclusion, was never in the slightest degree geared toward that "civilization and christianization" of the African that was always its publicized end. He depicts the brutalities and massacres that marked the conquest and rule as well as the endless humiliations imposed by the color bar.

But at the same time Mr. Hallett recognizes that the European conquest was, in surprising ways, beneficial to Africa. It provided a huge thrust, for instance, toward unification of the continent. Africa, in the mid-nineteenth century, had literally tens of thousands of polities—some, like the Ethiopian empire, highly structured and exercising strong central rule over areas of a hundred thousand square miles, others little more than village chieftainships. The modern map of Africa shows forty-seven well, if sometimes capriciously, defined states. Again, some seven hundred distinct African languages have been identified, the vast majority of them, in 1875, in a state of preliteracy. Today four languages, Arabic, English, French, and Portuguese, provide linguistic access to the vast majority of those engaged in Africa's political, cultural, and commercial affairs.

But consolidation in itself brought problems. In the reduction of the ancient African polities, the European powers have left to modern Africa a heritage not only of schools, roads, commercial infrastructure, and bureaucracy, but also of peoples lumped together in single states regardless of the ethnic and cultural ties that often divide them. The European system, too, of rule through division, achieved by raising certain groups over others, has left its mark in blood. Biafra is one example; the expulsion of the Asians from East Africa is another.

These are the patterns that Mr. Hallett traces with great lucidity. He divides his study into geographical sections—for example, Northeast Africa, Equatorial, South—and examines certain physical and cultural similarities in each section. He has attempted, somewhat too rigorously, to avoid what he terms the "seductions of biography," choosing instead to rely on political and economic factors rather than the peculiarities of individuals as the chief determinants of history. But the act of a single man can, if not change the course of history, at least radically deflect its timetable. Would the shape, educational system, and government of the Sudan be the same today had the martyred General Gordon, for instance, not been a highly stubborn eccentric? Those events which Mr.

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Hallett chooses to follow, however, are masterfully sketched.

From these pages it appears that Europe shaped modern Africa primarily by guesswork, much of it bad. The famous lines on a map drawn in the conference rooms of London and Berlin were lines drawn not only across *terra incognita,* but across land that no one even tried to get to know. Thus France annexed hundreds of thousands of square miles of desert and called it an empire; Britain strove to improve its colonial profits first with cocoa, a triumphant success, and then with groundnuts, a disaster. Constant squabbling went on about where Europeans could and could not settle, and whether they would rule themselves or be ruled from the metropolitan capital. These decisions, Mr. Hallett shows, unwittingly laid down the terms and conditions under which modern Africans live and will continue to live.

Wisely declining to prophesy the future, Hallett hazards the guess that white minority rule in South Africa is probably so powerfully entrenched as to be impervious to any kind of internal or external physical upheaval within this century. Rhodesia, too, at the time he wrote seemed secure; yet Rhodesia's position has been critically weakened by the impending independence of Mozambique and the severing of Salisbury's rail link with the port of Beria.

Beyond the final dismantling of the colonial structure, enormous problems face Africa: population growth (it is estimated that the continent may be home to seven hundred million people by the end of the century), catastrophic changes in climatic conditions best exemplified by the present drought, erosion of land, the rapid destruction of wildlife—these are likely to change Africa in a way that no one can now foresee.

But Africa will never again be what it was. The century of the Europeans, whatever its sins, opened a window on the world to Africa. The activities of school teachers, missionaries, engineers, traders, physicians; the availability of bicycles and sewing machines, automobiles, and transistor radios; and, perhaps most important of all, the experiences of those Africans who left their homes for education, work, military service

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and later returned, brought Africa into contact with other peoples, ideas, disciplines, and skills. All these things, finally, have made possible the meeting between the Masai warrior and Frank Sinatra.

Greed and the Modern Health Machine

BLUE CROSS. What Went Wrong? *By Sylvia Law. Yale University Press. $8.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES RIDGEWAY

Nearly everyone agrees that the modern American health system must go, but what is to replace this decrepit system, and how will a new and better method of medical care come into existence? For the last three years Sylvia Law has directed a scrupulously detailed inquiry into the underpinnings of a crucial aspect of the modern health machine, Blue Cross. The evidence gathered by her Health Law Project forms the foundation for this impressive book, which is a close history of the developing relationship between the Blue Cross health insurance system and the Social Security Administration. In all likelihood both of these organizations will be very much involved in organizing and administering a national health system for the United States, and Sylvia Law offers a valuable insight into the politics of the medical industry as it unfolds in Congress.

The origins of Blue Cross go back to the early part of the century when lumber companies in the West hired doctors to care for their employees, then deducted the cost of care in equal amounts from their pay. This practice antagonized the doctors in Seattle who thought they were being robbed of business, and they went to court to ban the lumber company prepayment schemes. When the Seattle doctors lost, they formed their own prepayment plan and urged residents to join them in the fight against the lumber company monopoly.

During the depression hospitals were hard pressed to keep going. Dr. Justin Ford Kimball, administrator of the Baylor University Hospital at Dallas, persuaded teachers at the university to pay six dollars a year to the hospital. In return, they were assured twenty-one days of hospitalization should they fall ill. E. A. Van Steenwyck began a similar plan in Minnesota, which he called Blue Cross. During the 1930s a committee was formed within the American Hospital Association to assist various local plans with information, drafts of modern laws, and so on. It was called the Blue Cross Commission. Gradually, then, Blue Cross grew up, resembling something of a producer cooperative. In 1948 Blue Cross grew in significance when it was selected to provide health insurance for all workers in the automobile industry. This was something of a fluke, for Walter Reuther and his top lieutenants in the United Automobile Workers' Union didn't really care much for Blue Cross; they wanted a national health insurance program. When that looked to be an impossible goal, the union settled on Blue Cross rather than have the premiums go to a private insurance firm. A series of national health policies then brought the local Blue Cross plans together, and created the beginnings of a centralized administration. Today this system resembles a mini-AT&T, with activities of the local plans finding coordination and direction within the Blue Cross Association, whose headquarters are in Chicago. All the while Blue Cross grew up within the context of the hospitals' bill collector. The trademark still is owned by the hospital association, and the directors of the two organizations overlap.

Passage of the Medicare law in the mid-1960s gave Blue Cross even more significance within the modern health industry. The conventional interpretation has it that Medicare represented a hard-won victory by liberals over conservative doctors organized under the aegis of the American Medical Association. This is charming myth. Actually any shrewd AMA doctor ought to have been enthusiastic about Medicare, for

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it opened the prospect of carrying on billions of dollars worth of new business at the expense of the federal government. Blue Cross was, quite logically, the vehicle for that control. Under the Medicare legislation, the secretary of Health Education and Welfare is to contract for health care for the aged through certain fiscal intermediaries, who in turn handle relationships with local doctors and hospitals. That provision was written expressly for the benefit of Blue Cross, and within short order, the American Hospital Association, on behalf of its member hospitals, nominated the Blue Cross Association as the intermediary.

As it turned out, the Medicare system virtually allowed the hospitals to establish their own federally financed program, by establishing through Blue Cross conditions and terms of service. All communications were routed through and interpreted by Blue Cross. Government directives to hospitals often were rejected by the hospitals unless they had been approved by Blue Cross. Hospitals established their own rates for care, and specified conditions. Medicare was charged with other unprofitable parts of their operations, and, in effect, it became the device through which the federal government systematically underwrote an extension of our present costly, inefficient, and grossly inflationary health system.

To begin with, this system was redundant. The Social Security Administration already operates a national communications system that reaches down to every locality. It is one of the few arms of the central state that is in daily communication with masses of ordinary citizens. There never was any real need for fiscal intermediaries.

This system apparently is to be replicated in a national health system under debate in Congress. Miss Law takes the view that it will be extremely difficult to change the health care system, and argues that preserving aspects of the Blue Cross system is worth trying. She writes:

> It is possible that the present Blue Cross organization could be transformed, so that the resource it represents could be used to administer a national health program primarily responsive to the needs of consumers of health

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services rather than to the research and professional needs of providers. Federal legislation could provide for contracting only with fiscal intermediaries that met specific requirements. For example, Congress could require that, in order to participate in the administration of national health insurance, a fiscal intermediary must be governed by a board that does not include providers of services but is composed of individuals who represent the population served with respect to income, age, ethnic background and sex and who are selected and removed in some democratic fashion.

Given Sylvia Law's own history of the organization, it is difficult to believe Blue Cross ever could have any serious social utility. It would make a good deal more sense for Congress to write legislation that would encourage local communities to create their own health systems that could then by financed directly through the Social Security Administration. The best thing that can happen to Blue Cross is for it to die.

Down the Lane

THE POLITICAL CRIMINAL. The Problem of Morality and Crime. *By Stephen Schafer. The Free Press. $7.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH WHITEHILL

Imagine standing at the entrance of a grand private lane in the country, as Fragonard might have painted it. Stretched before us is a long avenue of heavy old oaks and poplars, bordered in places with thick boxwood. Among the trees are vistas of rich lawns and fields beyond. The margins are carefully tended, the gravel is freshly raked smooth. As we walk up this long drive, we sense that it gives us feelings of history and tradition and wealth and aristocracy and man's occasional ability to shape things the way they ought to be. What are we to think, then, when we find at the end of this superb drive no manor house nor stables nor gardens nor potting shed—just an ordinary little suburban bungalow and nothing else? Are we astonished? Baffled? Cheated of a dream? Disappointed in some half-familiar way? Or, do we settle instead for having at least enjoyed the glory of the entrance drive?

The Political Criminal is 158 pages long, of which only the last 13—just 8.2 percent —are about the political criminal. The first 145 are the introduction. What I call the introduction, then, our metaphorical lane, is a fine stroll down the history of ethics, laws, and morals. Because Professor Schafer is a senior and gifted polymath, all the heroes are here: Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Hume, Kant, Spinoza, Spencer, Marx, Hobbes, Machiavelli, and many more of the generalists. The specialists, more familiar, perhaps, to criminologists, are here too: Ferri, Garofalo, Beccaria, Lombroso, Bentham, Bonger, Sutherland, Durkheim, and even that engaging headmaster, Frederick Wines.

On the long walk down the lane, the excellent paraphrast Schafer often stops us at especially handsome vistas: "In our time the complaint that politics is being criminalized might be coupled with the complaint that criminality is being politicized." He notes shrewdly that fads in criminology are accompanied by fads in crime. Referring to the "involved" as camp followers of the "committed" political criminal, for example, he says: "While the political criminal has the virtue of trying to expand the limits of the known, the 'involved' is usually unable to reach even the known limits." Nothing better has been said about the Symbionese Liberation Army's highly dramatized asininity, and Patty Hearst's perhaps mortally tragic silliness.

Along the way, Professor Schafer offers an occasional sparkle of special insight:

> The term 'political crime,' as commonly used, is not the offspring of the criminal law. It is in fact a somewhat artificial and arbitrary product of international law which facilitates the processes of extradition and the possibility of offering asylum for certain fugitive criminals.

Midway down the lane he even makes an attempt at defining what he means by "political criminal." "Where the unlawful battery

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of the criminal is aimed at the sum total of the lawfully prevailing ideology or value system, or at least at one of its representative or critical institutions, . . ." we have "an absolute political criminal." The ordinary criminal, then, whose behavior might under prevailing sociological theories be described as more or less proximately caused by such systemic political difficulties as racial discrimination, unequal opportunity, differential association, and so forth, is here called a "relative political criminal." Having thus feinted at it, so to speak, he quickly moves on.

With good grace, Professor Schafer reveals his feelings toward the criminologists who seem always to be *measuring* human behavior without *concluding* anything useful. (Remember, criminology was adrift and homeless when the great sociologist Edwin H. Sutherland rescued it in the 1930s, subsumed it, and required it to behave like a science.) "For those who appear infatuated with quantifying social truths," Schafer writes, "one may suggest that they count the number of criminal code norms; the stronger the voluntary belief in morality and the weaker the danger [for which read 'likelihood'] of violating the moral rules, the slimmer will be the book of penal statutes." Not bad for an hypothesis; not admirable as a cheap shot. Schafer seems to have little sympathy with the addictive nature of the habits of measuring, running statistical sets, making mathematical models, and competing for computer time-sharing at the great universities.

Farther up the lane Schafer shows the lability of the law; that the law nominates the minimum permissible morality; and that originally the givers of the Law (Confucius, Moses, Hammurabi, Zoroaster, Jesus) gave it to the Church, which soon was also the Sovereign, so that heresy and political crime are inextricably confused. Once in a while we stand before a perfect jewel of a view that makes us stop and think long, like Lord Hailsham's remark that

> the only law which there is any merit in obeying is the one you do not agree with either because you think it is mistaken or because you think it operates against your interest; and the

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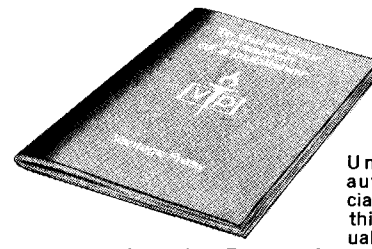

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only law which there is any merit in enforcing is the law which at least somebody would not obey if it were not enforced.

But after such heights, we descend to: "Crime has existed since the dawn of history, and all crimes have been committed because of blocked aspirations, whether political, economic, intellectual, communal, or sexual." That, to keep our metaphor, is just crabgrass.

Up again to another prospect that makes us stand in awe:

> Proal has postulated a broadened view of political criminals. Included in his definition are politicians who hypocritically act against political rivals, exploit ordinary people through pretended morality, commit evil deeds in the course of elections, use the law as an instrument of injustice to confiscate and rob, use demagoguery to promote agitations and to intimidate, and engage in other similar political activities. But also, or maybe first of all, Proal includes among his political criminals those nonpoliticians who would agree with the "officially" prescribed morality yet who do not stand up against the "political crimes" of the politicians.

That is from Louis Proal's *La Criminalité Politique*—published in 1895, or more than three-quarters of a century before the Watergate scandals.

Finally, after this long and various walk, we reach the anomalous bungalow at the end of the lane. To emphasize the scale of its ordinariness, I quote the entire passage:

> This element of "conviction" may serve as a distinguishing factor in discriminating the political criminal from the ordinary offender. It is a settled belief, essentially a deep-seated consideration of the political criminal's conscience that makes him feel that he has a rendezvous with destiny, that he is a David striking at a Goliath of injustice on a world scale, capable of imposing an order on the chaos of reality. . . . By contrast with the convictional criminal, the conventional offender almost always acts to fulfill his ego or personal interest, and his acts often lack an overarching coherence. . . . When the professional criminal burgles a bank, he acts for *his* personal gain; and when the drug addict forges a prescription, he does so to satisfy *his* personal addiction to narcotics.

And that is all there is to the house.

My favorite political criminal is Galileo. Apocryphal story or not, rising from his knees after his recantation, Galileo is said to have muttered, "Eppur si muove." We must try to hear that right. He was not saying, "You are wrong, and I am a cowardly hypocrite to have said you were right just to save my skin, my time, my studies, and my records." I think he was saying, "After all you have accused me of, and after all I have admitted, and after this is over and reduced in history—nevertheless, the earth *does* move."

Galileo is nowhere mentioned in Professor Schafer's book.

Guarding the Constitution: The Aftermath of Watergate

THE PALACE GUARD. *By Dan Rather and Paul Gates. Harper & Row. $8.95.*

Reviewed by LEWIS J. PAPER

Years before he entered the White House, Woodrow Wilson spoke to the central dilemma of every political system: "Constitute them how you will, governments are always governments of men, and no part of any government is better than the men to whom that part is entrusted." This observation is of obvious importance to any postmortem examination of the Wategate scandals. To be sure, the abuses that are now identified under the generic term "Watergate" reflect some serious deficiencies in our political institutions. There can be no question, for instance, that Watergate was possible in large part because, through law and custom, the modern presidency has accumulated a vast array of powers which often escape the check of the public, the Congress, and the courts.

But Watergate cannot be explained solely by reference to a presidency swollen

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with power or a Congress atrophied from disuse. Government officials had ample opportunity to corrupt the political process or abuse public powers long before Richard Nixon was inaugurated as president. Watergate, then, had less to do with a shift in political power than with the marked difference in the characters and attitudes of the individuals who exercised that power. Under Nixon there was a greater tendency—especially among many of the people who worked most closely with him—to succumb to what Senator J. William Fulbright described, in a somewhat different context, as the arrogance of power. Watergate represents not so much the inherent failure of institutions as it does the human failings of men unable to cope with power.

Only the naïve can believe that Watergate was the first time illegal methods were used to discredit a political opponent's campaign. But the Watergate break-in was scarcely an isolated incident. It represented only one in a series of unlawful activities and abusive practices organized by the Nixon White House. The abuses took many forms—wiretaps, illegal break-ins, the use of public offices to protect and secure political favors, the illegal use of confidential tax returns, among others; but regardless of the particular form, each of these abuses reflected an attitude whose path can be traced back to the Johnson, Kennedy, and earlier presidencies. These presidents placed a high premium on personal loyalty and a willingness to serve their political goals. But, with rare exception, each of those presidents had accepted the constitutional and legal constraints in securing that loyalty or in achieving those goals. Under Nixon the constraints evaporated. Personal loyalty to the president was equated with patriotism, criticism viewed as treason. Free speech, the right of privacy, the rule of law—these and other fundamental principles could be waived if the president wanted something done.

The evolution of this dominant attitude in the Nixon White House is examined in *The Palace Guard,* an incisive and well-written book by Dan Rather and Paul Gates, two CBS newsmen. Their book is not a rehash of the Watergate scandals—what they were and how they were exposed. It is instead an attempt to explain the characters and climate that made those scandals possible and, indeed, almost inevitable.

In large part, of course, most of the responsibility for the fall of the Nixon administration belongs to Richard Nixon himself. A deeply suspicious and insecure man, he could trust few people. (When John Dean referred to one man as "a friend of ours," Nixon quickly responded, "Nobody is a friend of ours! Let's face it.") In the beginning, Nixon did attempt to be accessible to new men and new ideas. He sensed that his reelection would depend on the creativity of his staff—especially if, as then expected, the Democratic nominee were to be Senator Edward Kennedy. It was during this period that Nixon accepted the advice of Harvard professor Daniel Moynihan to propose the family assistance plan, an innovative welfare program. Regurgitating Moynihan's lectures in history, Nixon later remarked to his aide that "it has always been Tory men with liberal principles who have enlarged democracy."

The period of "openness" was short-lived, however. Cabinet officers and other political figures outside the inner circle made Nixon uncomfortable. They pressured him to endorse programs—such as the model cities program and the supersonic transport plane—which he really did not like. He leaned further toward his natural inclination to isolate himself from almost everyone, even those whose ideas, cooperation, and support were crucial to his administration's success. This drift toward isolation proved to be Nixon's undoing. For the people he chose to rely on the most—H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, John Mitchell, and Charles Colson—had little political experience and little regard for principled conduct. Colson aptly summarized this attitude upon being sentenced to jail last spring for his illegal White House activities: "During the time I served in the White House," Colson said, "I rarely questioned a Presidential order. Infrequently did I question the President's judgment. I had one rule—to get done that

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which the President wanted done. . . ."

Nixon's drift toward isolation was accelerated after Senator Kennedy's experience at Chappaquiddick Island in the summer of 1969. Although White House aides publicly sympathized with the girl who died and her family, privately they were gloating. They were confident that this mishap eliminated any chance that Kennedy would face Nixon in his 1972 reelection effort. With this new confidence in Nixon's reelection came a willingness to throw caution to the wind. There was no need now to invite independent thought. (When White House aide Jeb Magruder wrote a memorandum proposing new ideas for presidential action, Haldeman returned it with a curt note: "Your job is to do, not to think.") There was no need now to tolerate the musings and suggestions of cabinet members (thus explaining why Interior Secretary Wally Hickel was forced to write a letter to Nixon—and leak it to the press—criticizing his decision to invade Cambodia). But the impact of the new mood was not confined to the internal politics of the administration. There was no need now to placate Congress either. Nor was there any need to demonstrate to the public Nixon's support for innovative welfare programs or other liberal measures. There was no need, in short, to appease anyone about anything. Rather and Gates capture the essence of this new aggressive mood when they write:

> Thus a new course was set. What had started out as a euphoric reaction to Chappaquiddick soon crystallized into a hard and bitter determination to poison the atmosphere with the politics of spite and vendetta—to wage unceasing war on Congress, the press, and . . . even members of their own cabinet who dared question the wisdom of the new strategy. This resulted from the concentration of power in the hands of men who, because they had no background experience themselves in the world of Washington—or in government on any level—chose to transform the White House into an embattled fortress, sealing it off from what they regarded as an alien city around them, a city infested with hostile groups seeking to bring harm to them and their President. Yet, because so much of the poison was bottled up within those walls, it was inevitable that it should spread inward, and that they themselves should become its ultimate victims.

Having no respect for the institutions of constitutional government, it was quite natural that the Nixon White House should reflect contempt for the legal constraints which make ours a government of laws and not of men. Their abusive and unlawful efforts, though pervasive and of far-reaching effect, were generally well camouflaged. Few if any members of Congress or of the press or of the public at large really knew the extent to which America was slowly being transformed into a police state of one-man rule.

Then—quite by chance—a security guard named Frank Wills happened to catch the five intruders in the Democratic National Committee's Watergate offices. The rest, as they say, is history.

The question remains whether institutional reforms can turn Watergate into an aberration of our nation's past rather than a prologue to its future. Restrictions on wiretapping, reform of campaign financing, and other new laws will certainly help. But new laws will not go far toward restraining those who are prepared to ignore legal limitations to begin with. Nor can any legislation ensure that a president will heed advice he neither seeks nor wants.

Part of the solution clearly lies not in the enactment of new laws but in the enforcement of existing ones. Certainly, Jefferson's remark that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance" has never seemed more pertinent. Watergate arose, in part, because the Congress, the prosecutors, and even the press (with some notable exceptions) were slow to fulfill their investigative and other responsibilities. Had they been more diligent in executing the powers they already possessed, the Watergate scandals might have been, if not prevented, at least uncovered earlier. The ultimate lesson of Watergate, then, is that the strength of our constitutional system depends not only on the wisdom of our laws but also on the determination of *all* the people—in the executive branch, in the Congress, in the press, and throughout the country—to see that those laws are rigorously enforced.

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*
—EDITOR

As a long time subscriber to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR I wish to congratulate you and the SCHOLAR and its readers on your appointment as editor. You have my best wishes.

I wish also to express my sorrow at the death of Dr. Bronowski. I did not know him except through his books and the articles which appeared in the SCHOLAR. I thought the most recent one, "Science, Poetry and 'Human Specificity'," especially profound. I feel bereft at the loss of such a deep humanity combined with a superb intelligence. There was a genuine comfort in a world that had someone in it who thought and felt as Dr. Bronowski did.

He was one of the rarest treasures that have come my way through reading the SCHOLAR. I am equally grateful to the editorial board, the staff and the tradition of scholarship and excellence for all the others too.

KATHRYN P. EAKEN
Cleveland, Ohio

* * *

I never had the honor of meeting Dr. Jacob Bronowski personally; recently I did have the opportunity of speaking with him on the telephone. That device with all of its cold electronic machinations, however, could not mask the gentle wit and open humility of this great humanist-scientist. He was both charming and gracious.

The purpose of my call was to ask Dr. Bronowski's permission to use his and Professor Derfer's article (AS: Summer 1974) as a focal point for our faculty in-service training program at Chabot College in Hayward, California. His scholarly interest was stimulated: why had I chosen that particular article; how did I see that article serving as an aid to the theme of our program; of course, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR would give permission (and he added hurriedly) so would he. . . .

While I was delighted with Dr. Bronowski's decision, I was moved more by his ability to use the common touch. I had read a few of Bronowski's books and had used his articles as resource materials for student readings, but never had I dreamed that the man who wrote so wisely and so well was equally unassuming as he was generous. But then, such characteristics are the mark of the truly accomplished person, and Jacob Bronowski has that type of greatness.

His death on August 22, 1974, was untimely—untimely because one wonders how many unfinished manuscripts were yet to be realized, how many worthy projects to be completed, how many ideas to be shared by a populace who saw in this prophet-scholar a sense of direction and reason for going.

The effect of Jacob Bronowski's article upon the minds of our faculty can not be measured; nor should it be. What can be measured is the extent of his generosity in sharing with us something personal, therefore precious—an example of humane behavior and open generosity. We did not need to lose him so soon.

BARBARA MERTES
Hayward, California

* * *

I am enamored of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and have subscribed for three years now. Perhaps like Richard Dyer MacCann (Autumn 1974), I have been upset by the impotency of American television to come to terms with the intellectual. Clearly he is not wanted on the air waves. The reasons why this is true in regard to commercial TV are obvious. In the case of so-called public television they are much more subtle.

I have wondered for some time why public television—which styles itself "educational" although one often wonders who, if any, are

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the educators involved—cannot mount a nighttime network talk show to compete with the vapid NBC "Tonight Show." The format could be simple enough and scarcely expensive: a couple of chairs, one or two cameras, an interlocutor and a single guest for that evening. Although each reader would undoubtedly have his own favorite roster of guests to draw upon, some unanimity could be expected, and the range might well include all of the various arts, archeology, psychology, history, sociology, and so on virtually *ad infinitum*. Anyone who thinks an entire evening spent with such illustrious guests as immediately come to mind (the list is easy enough to make: just think of anyone you would like to see on late-night TV but almost never have) would have the option of watching something more to his taste. The tragedy is that the choice, in the fullest sense of the term, has never been possible in this country.

To import British ideas of programing seems to me impractical, except of course one will always want to see the best of English theater, art criticism, and so on. But on a day-to-day (or night-to-night) basis, American TV must solve its problem itself. Unfortunately it is only the intellectual who knows so far that the problem even exists. Inasmuch as Public Broadcasting and NET remain unaware of the fraud they are perpetrating on the American public, no hope can be sought from that quarter. Only Congressional subsidy can act to prevent public television from continuing as the electronic combination of popularity contest and tired vaudeville it now is, at least in this sector of the country. Only the intellectual seems to know that "history" does not consist of old Charlie Chaplin films (at least not entirely), and that unemployed jazz musicians do not always an art festival make.

The present "choice" offered by American television is one of fresh versus stale entertainment. That is hardly a choice at all. Only when public television can get over the notion that it is in competition with the other channels for viewer interest will it begin to offer an adult fare half as dignified and elevating as "Sesame Street" has been for children. Meanwhile, I'm glad I can read.

FRED FISHER
Denton, Texas

* * *

I much enjoyed Arthur Schlesinger's article which is dished up in the elegance and eloquence that one has come to expect from that particular chef. I merely would like to call his attention and that of your readers to a pithy saying of Confucius, which expresses in one sentence the substance of the Schlesinger article. When asked what would be his first act if given power in a kingdom, Confucius responded by saying that the first priority must be given to the rectification of names!

WILLIAM GRAHAM COLE
Chicago State University
Chicago, Illinois

* * *

On the practice of quoting from other writers, Emerson wisely observed: "It is as difficult to appropriate the thoughts of others as it is to invent." The more reason to admire Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s "Politics and the American Language" (THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Autumn 1974) where quotations from Emerson—seven in all, and all straight to the mark—add cogency and force to Schlesinger's attack on cloudy, sleazy political language. And may I cite an eighth ringing sentence from Emerson for its peculiar applicability to Watergate cover-ups and to political salesmanship generally: "What you are stands over you, and thunders so I cannot hear what you say."

CARLTON F. WELLS
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (Act of August 12, 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

1. Title, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR: 2. Date of Filing, October 1, 1974; 3. Frequency, Quarterly—March, June, October, December; 4. Office of Publication, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

6. Names and Addresses of Publisher, Editor: Publisher, The United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; Editor, Joseph Epstein, 653 Hinman Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60202.

7. Owner: The United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; No stockholders.

8. Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent of More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None.

10. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.

11. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. of Copies Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run)	49,633	49,937
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales	855	550
2. Mail Subscriptions	43,420	45,407
C. Total Paid Circulation	44,275	45,957
D. Free Distribution By Mail, Carrier or Other Means		
1. Samples, Complimentary, and other Free Copies	3,248	1,000
2. Copies distributed to News Agents, but no Sold	350	200
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	47,873	47,157
F. Office Use, Left-Over, Spoiled After Printing	1,760	2,780
G. Total (Sum of E & F—should equal net press run shown in A)	49,633	49,937

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